

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly--By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

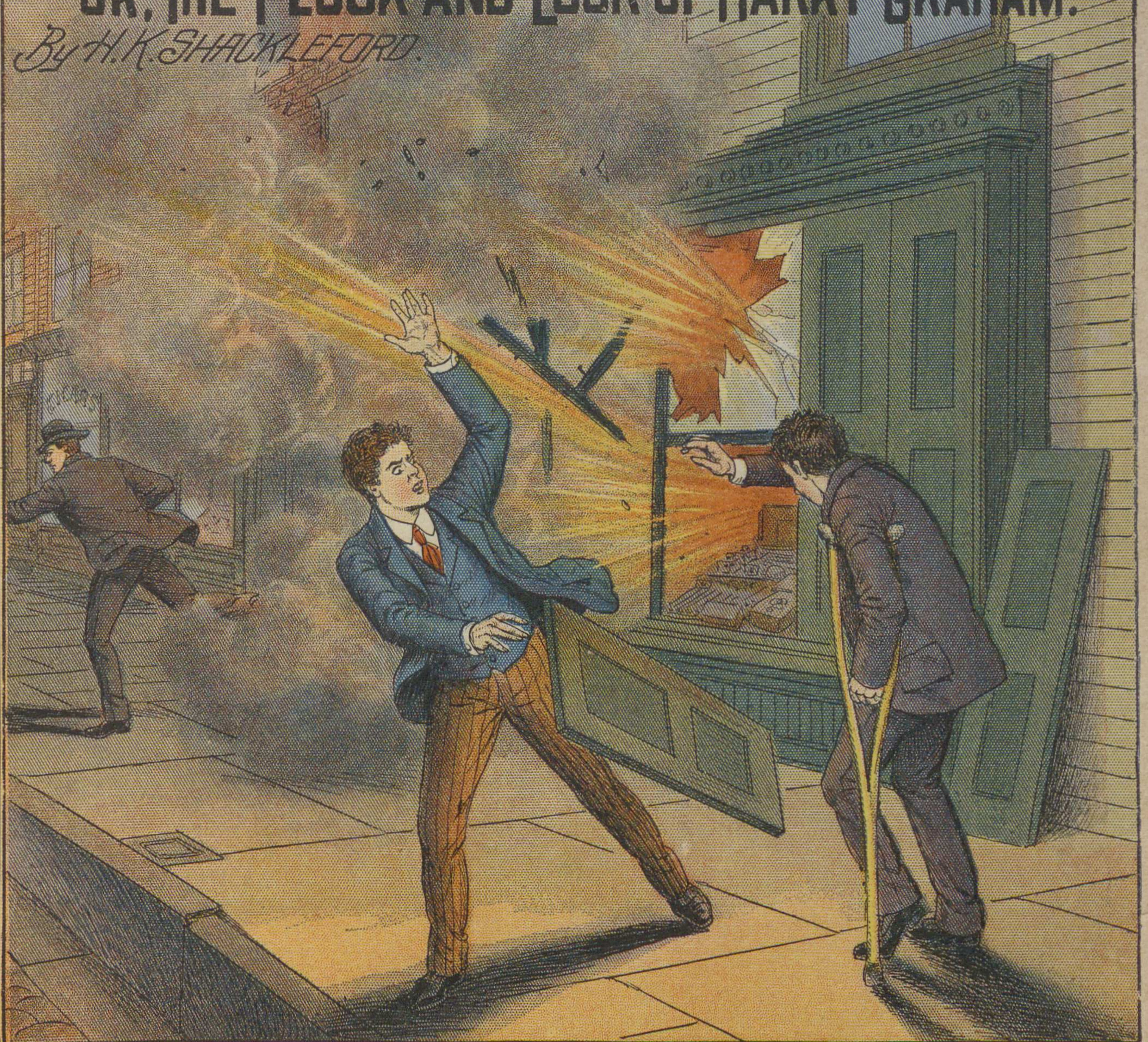
No. 456.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 27, 1907.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BOY MERCHANT; OR, THE PLUCK AND LUCK OF HARRY GRAHAM.

By H. K. SHACKLEFORD.



They took very little notice of the tough. But Joe saw him wheel around and throw something inside of the store to the farther end and then run. The next moment a frightful explosion followed and the little store was a wreck!

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THE BOY MERCHANT

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By H. K. SHACKLEFORD.

CHAPTER I.

A SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED CHANGE.

"Then there is not a cent due him?"

"No, not a penny."

"And we have been bothered with him for two years! I declare, John, it's enough to make one hate the very sight of a boy."

"So it is. When I accepted the guardianship I was told there was a big estate which would count up into the millions, and it really looked that way when I made examination of the papers. But this decision of the court knocks everything in the head, and he won't get a cent. I am going to surrender him to the court here, and ask to be relieved of the guardianship."

"I wish you would, and do so right away. I wish I had never seen the boy!"

There was a snap in the voice, as well as in the eyes of Mrs. John Drew, as she spoke, which told how truly she had spoken as to the wish.

Two years before the above conversation took place in the sitting-room of an elegant brownstone residence in New York, Mr. John Drew, a wealthy citizen of Gotham, received the news that an old friend of his had died in the West, leaving an only son and a large estate to his guardianship.

The trust was eagerly accepted.

He had several children of his own growing up, sons and daughters, and he hoped the management of a great estate would add to his own wealth; also a marriage of his ward to his eldest daughter Adele to make the final scoop, and get it all into the family.

But all this had been suddenly changed by a decision of a Western court on the validity of the titles to property, the deeds to which had been confided to John Drew when he accepted the trust.

Young Harry Graham, the ward of the guardian, was at school when the news came. He had not been told much

about the case anyway, because he was only a boy. But he heard of it soon after he came home from school.

Mrs. Drew met him in the hall at the foot of the stairs, and said to him:

"Harry, it turns out that your father really left nothing for you, and we have been taking care of a beggar for two years. You can't expect us to do so any longer. To-morrow you must leave this house and never come back again. We don't wish to have anything to do with paupers."

She turned away and went to her room, leaving him standing there in dumfounded amazement.

Her haughty coldness and cruel words cut him to the quick, and his face flushed. But she gave him no chance to reply.

He was a bright, sensitive lad of sixteen, with frank, laughing blue eyes and dark chestnut hair. In build he was sturdy, strong, and active as a cat. Every boy who knew him liked him.

With his face flushed and his eyes blazing he ran upstairs to his room and shut himself in.

"Lord, it's hard to bear!" he said through clenched teeth. "She called me a beggar. I never begged anything of her in my life, and I'd die before I would. I thought I'd be rich when I became of age, but something has happened, and I've got to hustle for my living. Well, I am not afraid of work. I hate having to leave school, for I did want to graduate with all the honors. I've got a good education, though. I'll pack up my things now and be ready to go in the morning. I won't eat another meal in this house, but will go to a restaurant for my supper."

In his then frame of mind he packed all his things in his trunk. He had a good wardrobe and many little things of value, all of which were put neatly away and the trunk locked.

Then he left the room to go downstairs and out of the house. At the head of the stairs he met Adele Drew, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Drew, to whom he said:

"I am going to leave the house, Adele."

"That's right," she replied coldly. "This is no poor-house for paupers."

And she had been so sweet on him before!

She was about his own age, but like her mother, cold, heartless and mercenary.

He made no reply to her cruel words, but went on down the stairs, at the foot of which he met Julia Drew, the second daughter, a sweet, blue-eyed miss of fourteen.

"Oh, Harry!" Julia exclaimed, in a low, tremulous tone of voice, lest her mother should hear her. "I am so sorry you are going to leave us! I—I—am—going to cry!" and she burst into tears.

"Never mind, Julia, dear," he said, taking her hand in his, "I won't forget you, no matter what happens. I can go out and work and make my way up to the top as other men have done. It seems my father's property turns out to be nothing at all. The lawyers have got it all, I guess. I won't leave till in the morning, and I must see your father before I do."

"But where are you going now?" she asked.

"I am going out for my supper," he replied.

"You won't eat with us any more?"

"No; your mother called me a beggar, and Adele called me a pauper, and I am neither."

She hid her face in her hands, and he turned and passed out of the house.

Out on the stoop he met Gus Drew, the eldest son of the Drews. He well knew that Gus hated him, because he beat him in all athletic sports at school, and because all the other boys were his friends.

Gus looked at him, and chuckled as he saw him go down the steps. Harry would not trust himself to stop and speak to him for fear he would be tempted to strike him. Gus and Adele were very much alike in disposition, so Harry went on down the street, and turned into the avenue. In a little while he was seated at a table in a well-known restaurant, enjoying a very frugal meal.

He was silent for a long time, thinking over the situation.

"I could stand it," he finally said to himself, as he sipped his tea, "if she had only spoken kindly to me. But to be called 'a beggar' by her and 'a pauper' by that stuck-up Adele cuts deep. Dear little Julia is the only one in the family who has any heart. I think Tommy is like her, though he is too young to understand such things. I won't cry over any of them. I've got my battle to fight, and may as well do it now as at any other time. Let me see what I have to start on. I've got \$7 saved up. My watch left me by my father will bring \$50 any time I may want it. But that won't go except as a last resort. But where can I go? That's a puzzle," and he was silent for some minutes.

He was thinking, and thinking hard, too.

"Ah! I remember when I took crippled Joe home the other afternoon I saw a card out—a furnished room to let. The widow keeps everything so nice and clean in her rooms. I'll go round there and see if the room is still empty."

Mrs. Beams was a poor widow with two children. Joe, her son, was a cripple and but fifteen years old. His back had been broken and was very crooked, and one of his legs was almost useless to him. But with all that he was one of the brightest boys in the city.

Sadie, the daughter, was seventeen, a bright girl who earned six dollars a week in a store on the avenue. She was the mainstay of the little household. The widow did dress-making, and thus they were able to keep a modest little home of five rooms.

Harry knocked at the door of the little home up on the third floor, and Sadie opened it. She quickly recognized him as the youth who had brought Joe home the day he was hurt by some rude boys, and said:

"Oh, is it you! Come in. Joe will be glad to see you," and she held the door open for him.

"Thank you, Miss Sadie," he replied, lifting his hat to her. "I didn't come to see Joe this evening."

"It's a call on me, then, I suppose. You are welcome just the same. Come in."

"I beg your pardon. I've come to see your mother this time. Is she at home?"

"Yes, take a seat."

"See here, Harry," called out Joe as he hobbled into the room and shook hands with him; "have you come courting the widow. If you have I'll tell you now she——"

"That'll do, old man," said Harry, interrupting him. "I have come to rent that room if it is still to let."

"It is still vacant," said Joe. "But what in the world do you want with it? What has happened?"

In a few words Harry explained the situation to him, adding:

"I can pay a month's rent in advance, and I guess I can earn my board at something."

Joe was astonished at the story.

"What will you do, Harry?" he asked.

"I don't know yet. I am a good trader, and some day I'll have a big store, Joe."

"I hope you may, Harry, but if you have no capital that store will be a long time coming."

Just then the Widow Beams came in and greeted him kindly. She liked him because he had befriended Joe on the street once.

"Why, yes, you can have the room," she said, when she heard his story. "I am sorry it has happened that way for you. But it's better for you to begin now than when you are old. Do you want board, too?"

"I'm afraid I can't pay board, too," he replied.

"Tut—tut—we'll risk that. Send your things here to-morrow, and the room will be ready for you."

He paid for the room for one month, and then went away to return to the home of the Drews.

CHAPTER II.

A WOMAN'S MUSS AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT.

Having his latch-key with him, Harry quietly opened the front door, and went upstairs to his room. He had hardly taken off his hat in the room when Gus Drew came in without knocking, saying:

"I hear you are going to leave us, Harry."

"Yes—I leave in the morning," he replied.

"Where are you going—to the Fifth Avenue Hotel?"

"See here, Gus," Harry said very quickly, "if you came in here to insult and crow over me you'll get your head punched by just speaking another word on that line."

"By George! You talk big for a pauper!"

Biff!

Harry gave him one on the nose in a straight line from the shoulder, sending him reeling clear across the room, a thousand lights flashing before his eyes.

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded Mr. John Drew, Gus' father, entering the room just as the blow was struck."

"He called me a pauper!" said Harry. "His mother called me a beggar, Adele called me a pauper; I had to take it from them, but I won't from him!"

Gus pulled himself together, and showed fight because his father was there.

"Leave the room, Augustus!" said his father, sternly. "It's cowardly to taunt a boy when he is down."

Gus left the room and went downstairs to bathe his nose and stop the crimson flow which the blow had started.

"Harry," said Mr. Drew, when Gus was gone, "I am sorry they have treated you so. I wanted to tell you myself. Everything your father left you is lost. You can't expect me to keep you; I have a large and expensive family to provide for. You have brains and good health, and can make your way in the world. I will speak a good word for you to anyone you refer to me."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said Harry. "I shall not need any recommendations. I am going to work for myself."

"Indeed! What are you going to do, pray?"

"I am going to do anything that I can do that is honest, and maybe I——"

He was cut short by Mrs. Drew, who dashed into the room white with rage, and demanded:

"Did you dare to strike Augustus?"

"Yes. He was blackguard enough to call me a pauper, and I hit him."

"Leave this house this instant, you miserable beggar's brat!"

She was beside herself with anger.

"Certainly, madam."

"John, have his trunk sent down at once!" said she, to her husband.

"You had better let him stay till morning," suggested Mr. Drew.

"Not another minute!" and she ran out of the room, leaned over the balusters, and called for a servant.

He came up quickly.

"Take Harry's trunk and put it out on the street!" she ordered.

The man took up the trunk and went downstairs with it.

Harry followed him.

When he reached the foot of the stairs, Julia Drew rushed out of the parlor, grasped his hand, and said:

"Good-by, Harry. I am so sorry," and when she let go his hand, she left a small package in it.

"Good-by, Julia."

"Go to your room, Julia!" called her mother, from upstairs.

"Oh, ain't she bold!" exclaimed Adele.

Harry put the small package in his pocket, and passed out of the house. He found his trunk on the sidewalk in front of the house, and quietly sat down on it, that being about all he could do at that moment.

A trunk on a sidewalk in a street like that at ten o'clock at night naturally attracted attention.

A servant girl living next door recognized him, and a few minutes later the entire household were gazing at him from the front windows.

Finally Mrs. Cranleigh sent a servant to ask him why he was out in the street with his trunk at that hour of the night.

Harry told him what had happened, and the man went back to report to his mistress.

The Drews saw him.

"Oh, Mrs. Cranleigh's servant is talking to him!" said one of the children.

The Cranleighs were the richest family in the block, and moved in the highest circles of society.

Mrs. Drew was worried.

"Just see what your hot temper has done," said Mr. Drew.

"A nice scandal for the papers in the morning, surely."

"He struck Augustus," was all she could say in reply.

"Yes, and when the truth becomes known everybody will say it was a pity he didn't give him a tremendous thrashing. You have made a nice muss of it, I must say."

"Well, you go out and tell him to come in. I was angry with him for striking Augustus."

"No, I won't do it. You had him put out. I won't bother about it myself."

She summoned the servant who had carried the trunk out.

"Go and fetch that trunk back into the house," she said to him, "and tell him to come in, too."

The man went out and told him what Mrs. Drew had said.

"I won't do it," was Harry's very prompt reply.

"I must take the trunk in," said the man, taking hold of it.

"You let it alone. It's my property."

"She told me to bring it in," and he lifted it up on his shoulder and started up the steps with it.

Quick as a flash Harry darted between his knees, upset him, and sent him and the trunk rolling on the sidewalk together.

He sprang up, seized the trunk a second time, and started up with it. Harry again tripped him and down he went with a crash that was heard all over the block. All the servants, and many of the families in the block came out on the stoops to look on.

"Really, my dear," said Mr. Drew very sarcastically, "the Cranleighs are all out on their stoop enjoying your circus. There comes a policeman, too. Why in the world didn't you think of sending out cards and make a social affair of it?"

Mrs. Drew, utterly overcome with horror at the ridiculous exhibition she had made of herself, retired to her room in despair.

Having received the report of their servant, Mr. and Mrs. Cranleigh went out to Harry.

"You haven't done anything wrong, have you, Harry?" Mrs. Cranleigh asked him.

"No. I merely punched Augustus on the nose for calling me a pauper, and I'd do it again."

"Then come into our house and stay there till you can get a place to go to."

"What's the trouble here?" an officer asked, coming up as Harry and the servant both held on to the trunk.

"This is my trunk, and that man is trying to take it into the house."

"Is it his trunk?" the officer asked the Drews' servant.

"Yes, but the missus told me to bring it into the house."

The officer grabbed him, saying:

"Come along with me. She has no right to interfere with another man's property."

The man protested, but it did no good. He was going to take Harry along, too, but Mr. Cranleigh promised to bring him to court in the morning. The officer, knowing him well, assented, and went off with his prisoner.

Mr. Cranleigh's servant took the trunk into the house, and then Harry went in with the family.

He told them his story just as the reader has it. Mrs. Cranleigh and her daughter Bessie were very indignant.

"I'll never recognize her again," said the mother, her eyes flashing with fire.

Harry knew then that a terrible punishment was in store for Mrs. Drew, who prized Mrs. Cranleigh's acquaintance above any other whom she knew.

He was shown upstairs to a small room, where he slept till morning. As he was dressing his hand came in contact with the little package in his pocket which Julia Drew had given him as he was going out of the house.

It was a piece of writing paper wrapped round something. On opening it he was astonished at finding a pair of diamond ear-rings—the ones Julia had been wearing ever since her last birthday. The writing on the paper said:

"Oh, Harry! I am so sorry for you! You have no money, nor have I. Take my ear-rings and sell them, and when you have made money you can buy me another pair. It is cruel to send you out of the house this way. I'll be your friend always.—Julia."

Harry burst into tears as he read the scrawl. He had a tender heart, and this touched it. He was wiping his eyes when the door came open and Mr. Cranleigh entered.

"What! Crying, Harry? That won't do for one who has got to make his way in the world."

"How can I help it, sir? Just read that. She slipped it into my hand last night, and I never looked at it till this moment. What a good heart she has," and he handed the note to Mr. Cranleigh, and laid the ear-rings on the bed.

He read the note.

"She is a noble girl," he said.

"Yes, sir, she is. But won't this make trouble? I don't want that."

"Of course not. If they should be missed and found in your possession, I think it would make a good deal of trouble for you. You had better leave them with me, and say nothing about them. She wants to aid you in getting a start in the world. If you are charged with stealing them, deny it indignantly, but say no more. Come down to breakfast now."

After breakfast Mrs. Cranleigh, in order to give the Drews a deep cut, had her carriage brought to the door to convey Harry and his trunk to the humble home of the Widow Beams. And the Drews, mother and daughter, turned ashen-hued with rage, as they thus saw him driven away.

CHAPTER III.

THE BOY MERCHANT.

"Putting on great style, ain't you?" said crippled Joe, as Harry came upstairs after alighting from the carriage.

"It does look that way, but Mrs. Cranleigh would send me in the carriage," Harry replied.

"Didn't cost you a cent, eh? The women and children in this block will look on you as a real live prince just over from Europe."

"Oh, stop that now!" and Harry laughed, as he showed the coachman where to put the trunk. He shook hands with the coachman, who went down to the carriage and drove away.

While he was unpacking his trunk, Joe sat near by and talked with him. Said the cripple:

"I am curious to know what you are going to do, Harry. There are so many people out of employment that situations are mighty hard to get."

"I am not going to try for a situation," Harry replied. "I am good at trading, and I am going to work for myself."

"Oh, well, you can't sell unless you buy, you know. How much money can you command?"

"About one hundred dollars, I guess."

Joe gasped.

Then he whistled.

He would have thought ten dollars capital enough.

"Well," he ejaculated, "I'm sure that's enough to start with. Didn't know you were so rich."

Harry told him about his father's watch, and added:

"I can raise money on something else if I have need to do so."

"Oh, I see. What are you going to sell?"

"I don't know yet. I think notions and all sorts of odds and ends would do if I could find a place suitable for a stand. I am going out to look around for a place," and half an hour later he went out and roamed through side streets on the west side in quest of a place.

Quite late in the afternoon he found a little store twelve feet wide, thirty feet deep and one story high—a mere temporary structure which was just being finished. It had one big

window in front, and was built up against a big factory building. On the window was a card—To Let—and inside was a gruff looking man putting up some shelves.

He walked in and asked:

"What is the rent?"

The man looked quizzically at him and asked:

"Do you want to rent it?"

"Yes, if the rent is reasonable."

"Fifteen dollars a month," the man said.

"I'll take it."

"What do you want it for?"

"A notion store."

"Very good. Can you give good references?"

"Yes, sir, and pay in advance, too," was the reply. "Mr. Cranleigh, the banker, can tell you about me."

"All right. I know him. Come around to-morrow afternoon and I'll let you know. Give me your name."

"Harry Graham."

The man wrote it down in a dirty little notebook, and Harry went out and made his way back to Mrs. Beams' humble home.

"Did you find a place?" Joe asked him ere he took his hat off.

"Yes, I think so," and then he told him all about it.

"Gee whiz!" Joe exclaimed, "that's a dandy place. Why, there's a dozen big factories down there and nearly all the operatives are girls. They are the customers of notion stores."

"Yes, I think it is a good place," said Harry. "But I haven't secured it yet. I've got to go over and see Mr. Cranleigh about it this evening."

After supper Harry went out and made his way over to the fine residence of the Cranleighs. He saw Gus Drew on the stoop of his home as he went by but neither spoke.

Gus didn't care to run up against his fist again.

Mr. Cranleigh received him very kindly and listened to his story.

"So you are going to open a little store and set up for yourself, eh?" the banker said.

"Yes, sir. I think I can do better that way than by running all over town looking for a \$3 per week situation."

"Do you know anything about the business?"

"Not much, but I am a good trader, and have a fondness for buying and selling. I know that to make money one must sell at a profit."

"Yes, of course. How much capital can you put into the business?"

"I can put up my watch and these earrings and raise \$100, I guess."

"Yes, easily. Leave the rings out. I'll keep them. Keep your watch, too. Come to me at noon to-morrow and I'll let you have \$100 on your promise to pay."

"Mr. Cranleigh, I—I thank you, sir!" and Harry's voice faltered as he spoke.

"That's all right, Harry. You have been badly treated, and I believe you have the right sort of stuff in you. There's the hand of a friend, Harry," and the banker reached out his hand. Harry grasped and shook it warmly in both of his.

"Now let me give you a little bit of business advice," continued the banker. "Whenever you pay out any money, take a receipt for it and file it away carefully. You will find it a protection against paying some bills twice. Then again, buy for cash and sell for cash. A small business must be run on a cash basis or it will soon wind up."

"That's just what I said to myself to-day, sir," Harry replied.

"Stick to it, then."

Harry went away very happy over his prospects, and went home and to bed to dream of future success. He was never so happy in all his young life as he was that night.

The next day he went to see the banker. To his surprise he met the owner of the little store he wanted to rent just coming out of the bank.

"Hello!" exclaimed the landlord. "Glad to see you. I've just seen Mr. Cranleigh, who says you are all right. Come round this afternoon some time and get the key of the store."

"All right, sir," Harry replied, and then went in to see Mr. Cranleigh himself.

The banker gave him \$100, and said:

"Now do your best, Harry, and never forget that honesty is the best policy in every business in the world."

Harry thanked him and went out feeling every inch a man.

When he reached the little store he found the landlord very pleasant indeed. He paid a month's rent, took a receipt and got the key, after which he went home and told Joe what he had done.

"Great Scott!" gasped the cripple. "You're going to open a regular store!"

"Of course I am. Did you expect me to peddle shoestrings?"

That evening Sadie Beams, who clerked in a big store in the notions department, assisted him in making out a list of things to buy, and the prices he should pay for them, where to go to buy, and other things.

Sadie was a very sensible girl. Said she:

"There are so many girls in those big factories down there that a soda fountain in your place would double your business."

"I'll inquire about that," Harry said, "and see if I can get one."

Early the next morning he went to a certain drugstore where a young friend of his attended the soda fountain and inquired about getting one for his place.

"Go see that man," said his friend, handing him the card of a sodawater manufacturer.

He went at once to see the man, who said to him:

"Buy your sodawaters of me and I'll rent you a fountain very cheap and keep it in order."

"Good!" said Harry, and he paid a deposit and settled that matter at once.

It took his four days to make his purchases, get the goods in and properly arranged.

The stock was so small he had to pawn his watch to get money with which to buy other things, and pay for a neat little sign put up over the door.

The sign read:

"HARRY GRAHAM,
"The Boy Merchant."

Joe went with him to sit on a high stool behind the fountain and draw the sparkling waters, and was happy as a bird.

The sign attracted immediate attention. Men and women smiled as they read it; but every boy and girl in half a dozen blocks around wanted to go in and spend a few pennies. They didn't want to buy anything of anybody but the Boy Merchant.

Hundreds of children stood in front of the store. Mothers came with their little ones and spent a few pennies. Sodawater went at three cents a glass. There was a profit of two cents on each glass.

A big, young and comely widow, Kate Mulligan, came in with her two little girls and bought a paper of needles and a spool of thread. As she was going out one of the little ones begged for some sodawater.

"Sure, an' niver a pinny more have I got, darlin'," she replied to the child.

"Is it yours, ma'am?" Harry asked her, touched by the eager longing in the little one's eyes.

"Yis, the pair of thim," she replied with motherly pride.

"And beauties they are, ma'am," said Harry. "Draw three glasses there, Joe."

Joe drew three foaming glasses, and Harry handed one to the mother and one each to the two children.

Kate Mulligan's eyes beamed with pleasure as she took the glass.

"Sure, an' it's the little gintleman ye are," she said. "Faith, it's meself as'll wait till ye grow up an' thin marry ye."

"Don't let a good chance slip you while waiting," Harry replied, and then they began talking.

Two young toughs came in and one called to Joe:

"Soda for two, sonny!"

Joe drew it and they gulped it down with great gusto and called for two more, which went the same way.

"Put it on de slate, sonny," said the taller of the two, as both started to leave.

Harry heard him, sprang forward, caught him by the arm and said:

"Pay for that soda, sir!"

The tough aimed a vicious blow at him, which Harry parried. But the next moment both of them sprang upon him, and he saw that he had the biggest job of his life on his hands.

CHAPTER IV.

HARRY WINS IN A FIGHT.

Harry was an expert with his fists and quick as lightning in a boxing match. With either one of his assailants he could have been an easy winner. But two were just one too many for him. For a minute or so he held his own with them, giving each one a black eye, besides other marks of his prowess. Then they rushed him, and he began to get the worst of it, when the Widow Mulligan, to whom he had been talking when the row began, took a hand in the game.

Without a word of warning she went at the taller of the two young toughs and slammed him against the wall with a force that dazed him. She followed that up with a cuff on the right ear, then one on the left—all in such quick succession he hardly knew what it was that he had run up against.

"Faith, but it's a fine lad ye are!" she cried, swatting him right and left. Her blows came so fast he couldn't even get his bearings, so he fell flat on the floor to let the cyclone pass over him.

In the meantime Harry was polishing off the other one in fine style. The widow ran to the door, shut and locked it to keep the crowd out, after which she quickly put her two little ones behind the counter by the side of Joe.

"Aisy now," she cried, going toward the one she had conquered. "Whist! Be me sowl, but that was a fine one! It's the little man ye are, me hearty!"

"Enough!" cried the young tough as Harry downed him. "All I want is twelve cents for four glasses of sodawater," said Harry.

"Ain't got it," was the reply of the young brute.

"Then I'll have some more fun with you," and he started for him again.

"Hold on! I've got a ticker. I'll put it up."

"Stolen property—don't want it!"

"Sure, an' yez are right," said the widow. "It's a young thafe he is sure."

Just then an officer rapped on the door with his club. He had looked in through the window and saw what was going on there.

Kate Mulligan knew him and quickly opened the door for him, closing and locking it again.

He was her cousin, in fact, and with him her word was law. She told what had taken place, and he lost no time in putting the nippers on the young toughs and marching them off to the station-house.

The crowd followed him, and for quite awhile the street in front of the little store was almost deserted.

"Madam," said Harry, turning to the muscular young widow, "I owe you a debt of gratitude which I——"

"Sure, an' did I have the fun av it wid yez?" she replied, her very eyes laughing as she spoke. "If yez iver nade a friend send over for Kate Mulligan," and she took the hands of her little ones and led them across the street into the big tenement house opposite the little store.

"She's a daisy, eh, Joe?" Harry remarked, as he gazed after her.

"Well, I should say she is," assented Joe, from his high stool.

"Treat her and her kids every time they come in——"

"All right. She is one to keep as a friend over here."

Trade came in again—a penny trade—but it was brisk.

Harry soon saw that nearly all the young girls of his own age who came in were eager to talk to him. He was polite and pleasant to every one, and exchanged greetings with them.

"When the factories stop work at six o'clock, we'll have the place jammed with girls, Harry," Joe remarked to him a little while before that hour.

"Let 'em come. We have nothing exposed." Business has been good for the first day. Hope we won't have any more young toughs in, though. Wonder if there are many like them down here?"

"Plenty of them, I guess. The papers say there's a gang over here—two or three blocks above. You want to keep an eye out for them."

"Yes, of course, but I don't care to have any trouble with them. I'll get me a club."

"You'll have to take care of yourself when attacked."

"Yes, I know, and I will, too."

When the factories stopped at six o'clock the operatives poured out into the streets, and in a few minutes the little store was jammed with girls. They all seemed eager to see and talk with Harry. He had a smile and pleasant words for every one. The soda fountain fairly whizzed.

In twenty minutes after the crowd came in the fountain gave out, yet a score of girls were waiting to be served.

"All gone!" Harry called out. "I am sorry. Didn't know you were all so fond of it down here. I'll have plenty on hand hereafter, and always be glad to see you."

The girls all went out, laughing and chattering like so many merry magpies, and Harry and Joe began to count up the receipts of the day.

"That sign did it, Harry," Joe said. "It catches the boys and girls, and makes the old folks smile."

"Yes, it was a happy thought. We may as well shut up and go home since the fountain is dry."

"Yes, I guess so," and Harry proceeded to put up the shutters to the front windows.

As he was doing so the landlord came by.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "You're closing up soon. Business dull?"

"Dull!" replied Harry. "All my sodawater is gone, and so is a third of my stock. I don't want any better trade than I've had to-day."

"Have you got the money for it?"

"Every penny but twelve cents, and those two beats are in the station-house."

"Had trouble already, eh?"

"Yes, a little scrap; but a Mrs. Mulligan happened to be in and gave me a helping hand."

"Kate Mulligan? You're in luck, my boy. Whatever Kate says here goes. Half the policemen in this precinct are either relatives or sweethearts of hers. Make a friend of her, my boy, and you're all right."

"Oh, we are friends already," said Harry, "and we are going to stay friends, too."

"Good! Well, good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Mrs. Beams was quite surprised at seeing them come home so early in the evening. But when she heard Joe's report of the day's business she was no longer astonished.

"I didn't dream it was such a good place for business," remarked Sadie, who had been at home but a little while before they arrived.

"It was the novelty of the sign, I guess," said Joe.

"What is the sign?"

"Harry Graham, the Boy Merchant."

She laughed heartily, saying:

"That was a good idea, Harry, and it will draw the boys and girls for awhile. But the novelty of a thing soon wears off. You want to try to keep it."

"I am going to," said Harry.

While the two boys were eating supper, a rap on the door sent Sadie to open it.

"Does Harry Graham live here?" a little ten-year-old boy asked.

"Hello, Tommie!" sung out Harry, at the table. "Come in, old man!"

It was little Tommie Drew, and as he entered the room, Harry grasped his hand and shook it warmly.

CHAPTER V.

THE DREWS IN A FIX.

The next morning after Harry's expulsion from the home of his guardian the Drew family met at the breakfast table.

Adele, the eldest daughter, saw that her sister Julia did not have her earrings. She asked her where they were.

"I can't find them this morning," she replied.

"What did you do with them?" her mother asked.

"I took them out last night and laid them somewhere. I guess I'll find them again," and she went on eating her breakfast.

Every one was cross. One of the chambermaids had been talking with others in the block, and she reported that the trouble of last night was the topic for all the neighbors that morning.

Mrs. Drew kept up a bold front before her servants, knowing that her bearing would be reported by them to the neighbors' servants.

She remarked that if any of her neighbors wanted to harbor the trash she put out of her house, they were at liberty to do so. She thanked God that she did not have to give her neighbors accounts of her conduct, and she was sure she didn't wish to call any of them to account.

"There is no accounting for tastes," she added, by way of a climax.

They saw the Cranleighs send Harry and his trunk away in their carriage, and knew that henceforth no more social intercourse could exist between the two families. It was a hard blow to the ambitious mother. She could not forgive herself, and Adele upbraided her for being "such a fool."

She sat down and racked her brain for some sort of justification of her conduct.

"Oh, if I could only think of something," she said to herself.

Suddenly she called to Julia to inquire whether or not her diamond earrings had been found.

"I can't find them, mother," Julia replied.

She sprang up and instituted a vigorous search for them, inwardly praying that they might not be found.

They were not found.

"We have been robbed!" she exclaimed, and she at once ordered the carriage. She would go to the chief of police and tell him about it. Even if the rings were not found the neighbors would hear of the robbery. That was just what she wanted. She would hint that she did not care to press the matter as the thief was known, and she would not ruin him by sending him to prison.

She played the game well. The detective came and after a diligent investigation came to the conclusion that the jewels had not been taken by burglars—that the house had not been burglariously entered, but that they had been taken by some one in the house.

"I suspected as much myself," she said, "but I wanted to be sure. I didn't wish to do any one an injustice. You need not go any further with the matter. I don't care to prosecute the thief. He can never enter my house again."

Her words were repeated by her servants, and soon Mrs. Cranleigh heard that she had harbored a thief in her house all night. She laughed and said she had not been robbed, and she believed she had as many valuables in her house as some other people she knew of, and so the social war went on.

Taking the cue from his mother Augustus went among his acquaintances in the block and told them how his sister's diamonds had disappeared at the same time Harry Graham did.

"Do you think he stole 'em?" Willie Groome asked.

"I don't know. It looks suspicious—don't you think so?"

"No, I don't," said Willie, who liked Harry. "Harry Graham would not do such a thing, and you wouldn't dare tell him so either."

"Yes, I would, too."

"Not much! He'd put a head on you so quick you'd think a cyclone had struck you."

In the meantime the friend of the Cranleighs gave the Drews the cut direct. It began to look like social ruin to them, and Mrs. Drew was so enraged that she could have wreaked a terrible revenge on the youth who had been the innocent cause of it all.

"John," she said to her husband a few days later, "we have two daughters whose future prospects are on the verge of ruin. We must take steps to justify our course in regard to Harry, and——"

"I don't see how we can, my dear," he said, interrupting her.

"He has done nothing wrong. The wrong is all on your side."

"But for the sake of our daughters we must shift it all to his side," she returned. "I believe that Harry got those diamonds, though. I can't prove it on him. But from the fact that they disappeared with him nearly everybody will believe him guilty."

"There is where you make a mistake, I think, dear," said he. "No one will believe he took them from the fact that he did not leave the house voluntarily. People will say that had he stolen them he would not have waited to be put out. Had he ran away they would all have believed in his guilt. It won't do," and he shook his head in a very discouraging way for her.

"Well, I'll show you and everybody else that he is guilty,

and I will get the proofs, too," and she shook her head in a very determined way.

"This muss is all of your own making," he remarked, "and the more you work at it the worse you will be."

"Would you have us all tabooed and run out of society?"

"No. Let it blow over. It will soon be forgotten. Whatever you may do now will only keep the ugly facts before the minds of our neighbors."

"Oh, you men don't know the cruelty of woman to woman. I must win now or we are ruined. You attend to your affairs and leave this to me," and she left him to go to her room and talk the matter over with her eldest daughter Adele.

Julia overheard them. They agreed to have Gus drop a valuable diamond ring belonging to his mother into Harry's pocket, where it could be found when searched by an officer. That would settle the matter of his guilt, and crush those who had been defending him.

Julia was horrified and went to bed pale as a sheet and cried herself to sleep. She knew Harry was innocent of any wrongdoing.

When she awoke the next morning she had made up her mind to warn Harry of the trap that was being set for him. She wrote a little note and put it in her pocket. Then she got Tommy to find out Harry's address from the Cranleighs' coachman. She knew she could trust the little fellow, and that night he paid a visit to Harry at the home of the Widow Beams.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WARNING AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT.

Harry ate his supper and talked with little Tommie at the same time, the little fellow answering his questions as fast as he put them.

"I say, Tommie," he finally said, "I've opened a little store down on —— street, and run a soda fountain in it. Come down and see me and I'll treat. It's No. 571."

"You bet I'll come," the little fellow replied, his eyes sparkling. "It must be fun to run a store like that."

"Lots of fun, and plenty of hard work, too. Joe and I had all we could do to-day. The place was just crowded with boys and girls."

When Tommie was ready to leave Harry said he would walk part of the way with him.

Out on the street Tommie gave him Julia's note, saying:

"Jule told me to give you this an' not let nobody know it."

Harry took it and went up to a gaslight to read it.

"Dear Harry," he said. "Somebody is going to drop a diamond ring in your pocket, and then you are to be arrested. Look out and burn this.

JULIA."

"Tell her it's all right, Tommie," he said, as he folded up the note, "and that I won't forget her kindness; and look here, Tommie, you are my friend, ain't you?"

"You bet I am!"

"Well, I am yours, too. Here's my hand on it," and they shook hands. "Now don't let anybody but Julia know that you have been to see me. Keep it to yourself and I'll be your friend as long as we live. Good-by. Come down to the store to-morrow if you can."

Tommie shook hands with him and went on toward his home, more than ever determined to stand by Harry.

"That's the game, eh?" said Harry to himself on his way back. "It's the meanest yet. I'll keep my eyes open, and if I catch anyone trying to put a diamond ring into my pocket

I'll make him wish he had never been born! Oh, what a mean game it is! I wonder who will bring the ring? I must watch everyone who comes about me after this, and search my pockets every few minutes."

The next day Harry was in his little store waiting on customers when Gus Drew came in.

"Hello, Harry!" greeted Gus. "I heard you had opened a store, and came down to see if it was true. You've got a bully little place!"

Harry was dumfounded for a moment or two. He didn't think Gus would ever want to speak to him again. Gus noticed his amazement, and said, laughing:

"You didn't expect me to call, but I wanted to see you and tell you I had no hard feelings toward you. Give us a glass of soda—lemon. Have one yourself. I'd like to run a shebang like this myself if father would let me."

Harry drew a glass of soda for him and said:

"It's all right, Gus. It wasn't your racket the other night, though you did stick your nose into it."

"Yes, and got it smashed," and Gus laughed, as he drank the sodawater. "But let bygones be bygones. Some of them talk hard about you, but I am not one of them," and he walked about the little store admiring everything. Harry was with him, but on the lookout. He believed Gus had the ring.

In a few minutes he found it in his pocket. Quick as a flash he dropped it into Gus's left-hand pocket, knowing he never carried anything on that side.

A little later Gus left, promising to come again next day. Scarcely ten minutes passed ere a man came in and asked:

"Is Harry Graham in?"

"Yes—that's my name," said Harry.

"I want you," and he laid a heavy hand on Harry's shoulder.

"What do you want with me, and who are you?" Harry demanded.

"I am a detective. Come along with me quietly now, or I'll put the nippers on you."

Harry turned to Joe and said:

"Run the business the best way you can till I come back," and then passed out with the detective.

There were no customers in the place at the time, hence no crowd gathered. Harry reached the station with the detective without exciting the attention of the small boys in the block.

He found Gus and Adele and his mother there—in the captain's office.

"You are charged with stealing a large solitaire diamond ring belonging to Mrs. Drew," said the captain to him. "Search him, sergeant."

"Who makes that charge, captain?" Harry asked.

"I do," said Gus. "I saw you with it myself."

"Oh, I always knew he was a thief!" said Mrs. Drew.

"So did I," put in Adele.

"But he has no such article in his possession, madam," said the sergeant, after a thorough search of his clothes.

"What sort of a ring was it?" Harry asked.

"You know well enough, you thief," she replied. "It was my wedding ring with my initials in it."

"Oh! I saw your rogue of a son with it this morning. I thought maybe you had given it to him. I guess you'll find that he is the thief!"

"What! My son a thief! Call my son a thief! Captain, do you hear that?"

"Yes, madam," said the captain.

"Search him for the ring, captain! I know he is a thief and——"

"Search him! Search him!" cried Mrs. Drew. "Search him and see how that young thief lies!"

The sergeant searched Gus's clothes—all his pockets—and found the ring.

"Madam, your son is the thief," the sergeant remarked, as he held up the ring before her.

She was utterly dumfounded and could not utter a word.

"Madam," said Harry, "the officer says Gus is the thief. Captain, I demand that he be held till I can get a warrant for his arrest."

"No—no!" cried Mrs. Drew. "I withdraw the charge!"

"You can do that in court to-morrow, madam," said the captain. "I am not a judge. I can't settle the matter that way. I can say this to you, however, that this young man has got both you and your son in a tight place. It is a very serious matter to charge one with theft. He can make a case against you for false imprisonment. It will also take a good deal of money and a sharp lawyer to save your son from State prison."

"I didn't steal it," whined Gus, now thoroughly frightened at the turn the affair had taken.

Harry laughed sarcastically, and Adele flew into a rage.

"Harry Graham," she hissed, "you are a thief—you know you are!"

"Bah! I can afford not to notice anything coming from the sister of a thief! You are in this conspiracy to ruin me, too, and if you are not very careful you'll go up the river with him. A nice jailbird you'd make, too."

She gave a scream and fell in a faint on the floor.

Gus gave a hiss and sprang at Harry like an enraged tiger, and ere the astonished officer could prevent it they were hammering each other like two young pugilists.

But they were soon separated, and Gus was led away to a cell.

Mrs. Drew was almost paralyzed with horror. But she regained her speech, and said:

"Release my son! He has done nothing!"

"I beg your pardon, madam. You have had this young man arrested for stealing your diamond ring. It turns out that your son was the thief. You had better go home and let your lawyer see the judge about it to-morrow."

"In the meantime put his picture in the Rogues' Gallery," suggested Harry.

"Harry Graham!" cried Mrs. Drew, springing up and clutching Harry by the arm. "Come here! I must tell you something!" and she led him to a corner of the room where she asked in a hoarse whisper:

"Are you going to prosecute Augustus?"

"Yes, and you, too," he replied.

"Why, what have I done?"

"You swore to a lie in that warrant. You sent Gus to drop that ring into my pocket, and then went before a judge and swore I had stolen it. Bah! There are better women than you in the worst slums of New York, madam!"

"My God!" she gasped, turning ashen-hued in the face. "I—I—I——" and staggering halfway across the room, she sank down to the floor in a death-like swoon.

CHAPTER VII.

HARRY AND THE IRISH WIDOW.

The two officers rushed forward, lifted the fainting woman from the floor and bore her to a sofa. Adele came to and screamed.

"Keep quiet, please," said the captain; "she is in no danger."

But she had become hysterical to such an extent the police surgeon had to be summoned. She uttered scream after scream and could not stop.

The surgeon brought the mother to and quieted Adele.

"You had better take your carriage and go home now, madam," the physician advised.

"No. I must see Harry Graham before I go," said the miserable woman.

The captain turned to Harry and told him what she had said.

"Tell her to send her lawyer to see mine. I don't wish to have anything more to say to her."

Mrs. Drew sprang up and went to him.

"Harry, you would not have the heart to ruin us?" she said.

"Madam, if you will make a written confession of the truth of this matter, and sign it in the presence of the captain, sergeant and doctor, I won't prosecute either you or Gus—the treacherous thief that he is."

"I am too nervous to do anything now, Harry," she said, "but promise me you won't do anything till my husband has seen you. I'll send him to you to-night—as soon as he comes home. You won't deny me that, will you?"

"Oh, no. I'll wait till I see him. But you may rest assured that the pie you cooked for me you shall eat yourself. Officer, may I go back to my store?"

"Yes. But you must appear at court to-morrow and answer to your name."

"My God!" gasped Mrs. Drew. "Can't it be kept out of court?"

"Your husband might manage it with the judge. I have no say in the matter at all."

"And my son?"

"He must stay where he is until his case is settled one way or the other."

She re-entered her carriage and was driven away with her daughter, the most broken-up woman in New York.

"Young man," said the captain to Harry after she was gone, "there is something behind all this that does not appear on the surface."

"You are right," replied Harry; "there is a great deal behind it, and a woman's hate is the mainspring to all this trouble."

"What are the particulars?"

"I won't tell anything till I have seen Mr. Drew. That young rascal in yonder may tell you, though, as he is frightened almost to death."

Harry then left and returned to his store, to the great joy of Joe.

"How did you get away?" Joe asked, as he came in.

"Threw him into the sewer and skipped," replied Harry.

"Rats! Come down to business."

Harry told him the story, and suggested that he say nothing about it to anyone.

"Nobody knows of it round here," said Joe. "If you let up on them you ought to be smoked for a ham."

"I am not going to let up," returned Harry. "I have had enough trouble on their account. It's the woman, though; she runs the mischief mill."

Business continued good during the afternoon, and Harry had no reason to complain of the receipts. The girls in the factories in the neighborhood wanted to see the boy merchant and get acquainted with him.

They saw that he was good-looking, lively, and full of business. When the factories closed for the day he sold over two hundred glasses of soda water within an hour. As the time for him to close drew nigh the crowd of young people seemed

to increase. Everyone wanted to buy something from the boy merchant.

Among them were three or four young roughs, friends of those who had come to grief there the day before. But neither Harry nor Joe knew anything about them, and so they went on with the pleasant task of waiting on the customers.

Suddenly Mrs. Mulligan, the jolly young Irish widow who gave Harry such handy assistance the day before, came in.

"Good-evening, Mrs. Mulligan," said Harry, as she came in.

"Good-avening, to yez," she returned; "an' it's a paper av pins I'm afther buying av yez."

"Here they are, Mrs. Mulligan," said Harry. "It's against the rule of this store for you to come in and not take a glass of soda with me."

"Sure, an' it's mesilf as'll niver break yer rules, Misther Graham."

"And don't I know that, Mrs. Mulligan? What's your syrup this time?"

"Vanilly, av ye plaze."

"Vanilla for two, Joe," and Joe drew the two glasses for them.

"Here's looking right at you, Mrs. Mulligan. Troth, an' I can't keep my two eyes off of you."

"Arrah, now! Whin did you kiss the blarney stone? Don't be afther turning a poor widdy's hed, me bye."

"The man doesn't live who can turn your head, Mrs. Mulligan," returned Harry. "You have too much sense in it for that."

"Blarney!" And she laughed merrily as she put down the empty glass. Then she looked around and saw the three or four young toughs present.

She recognized them in an instant, and whispered to Harry:

"Sure and they mane mischief, the blagguards. Shut up your store and be afther goin' home."

Harry saw the danger at once, and proceeded to shut up for the night. The young toughs went out quietly and waited for him on the street.

Mrs. Mulligan walked with Harry till he reached his door, and the young toughs followed. They did not make any demonstration, for they knew Mrs. Mulligan too well to try it on when she was around.

"Mrs. Mulligan," said Harry, when she turned to leave, "I won't forget you. I'll take care of them the next time. May you dream of Heaven till morning."

She smiled and turned away, and Harry and Joe went upstairs to Mrs. Beams' floor.

Harry was just through with his supper when a rap on the door told him that a visitor was at hand.

It was Mr. John Drew.

Harry arose and received him with great deference, introducing him to Mrs. Beams, Sadie and Joe.

"Take a seat, Mr. Drew," he said, tendering him a chair.

"Thanks, Harry. I have but little time to stay. I would like to have a talk with you in private, if you please."

"Certainly. Come into my room, Mr. Drew," and Harry led the way into his room and shut the door.

"Harry, I have come on a very painful errand," said his guardian, as he sat down.

"I know what it is, Mr. Drew," replied Harry. "You want to ask me to let up on Gus and his mother, but I won't do it."

"My God, Harry! You won't send my boy to prison!"

"Mr. Drew, do you know that Mrs. Drew sent Gus to put her ring in my pocket, and then swore that I had stolen it? Do you know that?"

"Do you know it, Harry?"

"Yes, sir; he slipped it into my pocket. I quietly dropped it into his and turned the tables on him. I will let up only on one condition—that she acknowledge the facts in writing,

signed in the presence of witnesses, the paper to be given to me."

"What would you do with it?"

"Publish it in all the papers the next time she, Gus, or Adele gave me any more impudence or trouble."

"She will never consent to place herself in your power that way."

"She is in my power now, and to-morrow will be too late."

"Have you no compassion for a mother in distress?"

"Not for one of her stripe. In my place what would you do? Has she any more heart than a rattlesnake. I am willing to let her escape if she gives me a guarantee that will protect me."

"She'll give you her word of honor not to——"

"She has no honor. I wouldn't believe her under oath. I am sorry for you, Julia and Tommie. But for her—if that confession is not given me in writing I'll expose her and prosecute Gus."

Mr. Drew hung his head, and tears coursed down his cheeks. But Harry was firm as a rock. He had the upper hand of the Drews, and he did not intend to release them.

"Mr. Drew," he finally said to his guardian, "can you point to any act of mine that should subject me to the treatment I have received at the hands of Mrs. Drew?"

"No."

"You do not blame me, then?"

"No. I simply beg a favor at your hands."

"I cannot grant it if it is to show her any mercy."

"How long will you give me to bring her to terms?"

"Till noon, to-morrow."

"If she will not?"

"Then I'll push her to the wall and prosecute Gus to the full extent of the law."

"Where can I meet you to-morrow morning at, say, ten o'clock?"

"At my store."

Mr. Drew quietly arose and left the house, and Harry retired to think and sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DESPERATE GAME.

The next day Harry and Joe were busy waiting on customers, when Mr. Drew alighted from a carriage in front of the store and went in.

"My wife wishes to see you, Harry," he said.

"Where is she?"

"Out there in the carriage."

Harry went out to the carriage.

But he did not lift his hat to her. She was heavily veiled, so he could not see her face.

"Harry, here is a check for one thousand dollars, payable to your order. You will let that matter drop, will you not?"

"No, not for \$10,000, and you may rest assured that I mean what I say! You have no one to blame but yourself."

"Don't be foolish, Harry. \$1,000 will start you well in business."

"Yes, and with the brand of a thief on my good name. A million dollars would not tempt me to do it."

"You must have that paper you spoke of, then?"

"Yes, and signed in the presence of two witnesses."

"Well, come with me to my lawyer's and I'll sign it."

"I will go only to my lawyer. You can bring yours there if you wish."

"You are cruel, Harry."

"Yes, so I am to rattlesnakes."

"Do you mean to insult me?"

"No. Such as you can't be insulted. There are better women than you in the slums."

She gasped for breath. He was merciless, and she powerless.

"Some day you will regret this," she remarked.

"Perhaps so. You won't, though, perhaps, unless it is that you failed in your game."

"Get in and tell the driver where your lawyer's office is."

"I will meet you there," said Harry. "I don't care to ride in your carriage."

Mr. Drew came out from the store, and his wife told him that Harry would not ride to his lawyer's office with them.

"You are very angry now, Harry," he said, "but this is to settle a matter in a friendly way, and I don't think you should show such vindictiveness."

"You are yielding only to the situation," Harry returned.

"Mrs. Drew would hurl me to my death at this moment if she could do so without danger to herself."

"I think you are mistaken, Harry. Get in and ride downtown with us, and let us settle this matter once and for all. Had it been left to you and me it would have been settled long ago. Come! This may be the last time we may ever ride together," and he pushed Harry into the carriage as he spoke.

Joe was standing in the door of the store, and Harry called out to him:

"Take care of things till I come back, Joe. I don't know how long I may be gone," and then the carriage drove off.

Harry sat beside Mr. Drew, and Mrs. Drew faced him.

A silence of several minutes followed, during which time the carriage was driven rapidly downtown.

"I am very sorry all this has happened, Harry," remarked John Drew, the first to break silence.

"So am I," returned Harry, "but who is to blame? I've done nothing for which I should be treated as I have."

"The fault is all mine," said Mrs. Drew. "I am going to sign that paper and then move away from New York forever."

"There is no need of that," put in Harry. "I shall keep it locked up and never let it see daylight, unless you force me to publish it to the world."

"But you might die, and it would then come to light. I shall live in a terrible suspense all the time."

"That is to be your punishment, madam. Don't forget that you suffer less than I would had your game been successful."

Mrs. Drew put her handkerchief to her eyes, and pretended to be quite overcome at the hard words she had to listen to.

Mr. Drew looked on in silence.

Mrs. Drew took a small cut-glass bottle from her pocket, and poured a few drops of a colorless liquid from it on her handkerchief.

Harry looked at her as she wadded the handkerchief together. She looked him full in the face for a moment or two, her eyes gleaming with unsuppressed rage.

Suddenly she leaned forward, seized his coat collar, and clapped the handkerchief to his nose, and held it there.

Harry was taken utterly by surprise. But he struggled to free himself. Yet he felt a queer sensation the moment he inhaled the odor from the handkerchief. He felt his strength leaving him, and a moment or two later consciousness left him.

When he came to, he found himself lying on the grass under a clump of bushes in Central Park. His clothes were wet with dew, and he felt a dreadful nausea at the stomach.

He sat up and tried to think and pull himself together. It did not take him long to recall all that happened to him.

"It's the continuation of the game," he muttered to himself. "She is a bold woman to work it as she does. I wonder if she thought me dead, or if she has put more diamonds in

my clothes? I may as well look and see." And, sick as he was, he searched in all his pockets for anything that did not belong to him. He found nothing, and the fact relieved him very much.

"She must have thought me dead," he muttered, "and had me left here to be found several days after. Lord, but she has nerve! I am sick enough to die. Hello! I wonder what that is," and he felt something inside the lining of his coat down at the skirt. "It feels like a ring of some kind. I wonder how it got in there? This is a new coat, and there are no holes in the pockets or lining. I'll cut it out and see."

He took out his knife, cut the lining, and out came a fine diamond cluster ring.

"Adele Drew's ring, as I live!" he gasped, as he looked at the sparkler in the starlight. "I've seen it a thousand times. Her father paid \$600 for it at Tiffany's two years ago. She shall never see it again. They aim to have me arrested again when I have it in my possession. But they won't find it," and he arose and staggered out in the roadway, feeling sick enough to die. Passing a bowlder of rock, he found a small crevice into which he dropped the ring. Then he pulled up some grass and stuffed it in the crevice, saying as he did so:

"No one will notice the grass in there and it will be dry in a day or two. It will remain there for years, as the rain can't wash it away. I'll go home now, and send for a doctor. I am as sick as a dog," and he staggered away toward the exit for that particular driveway.

The walking did him good, and by the time he reached the exit he was feeling much better than when he started.

It was after midnight when he reached the corner near where he lived. Just as he was about to turn to enter the house a man tapped him on the shoulder, and said:

"I want you, young man. Come along with me."

"What's the matter? Who are you?" Harry asked.

"I am a detective. You come along now," and he clapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists as he spoke.

"I am not resisting you. Why handcuff me?"

"Oh, come along!"

At the station the sergeant recognized him, and said:

"Back again?"

"Yes—it's the same old game."

"Well, we'll have to search you."

"All right."

They found nothing on him; but they locked him in a cell.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DREWS ARE BEATEN.

Harry did not sleep any during the rest of the night, and when morning came he was so ill that a physician was sent for. He told the doctor what had happened to him, and the astonished physician at once gave him a medicine that relieved him.

When he was taken to court no one appeared against him, and he was sent back to his cell. Then he sent for Mr. Cranleigh, and told him everything. The banker was dumfounded. He sent his lawyer to look into the case.

It then turned out that Gus Drew, to save himself, had given his mother dead away, and a warrant for her arrest had been issued. She had fled when the officer reached the house, and he came back without her.

Mr. Cranleigh's lawyer had Harry released, and he went to the store to find that Joe and Mrs. Mulligan had been running things smoothly.

"Well, hadn't you better give an account of yourself," said Joe, as he shook hands with him.

"Yes; I've been very busy settling up that little business with the Drews."

"Have you settled it?"

"Not quite. But the old lady has skipped out, and the boy is still in his cell."

"Well, that's getting on toward a settlement, I should say. You owe Mrs. Mulligan ten thousand thanks for helping me pull through. But for her I should have had to close up."

"Whist! Don't be afther talking the loikes av that," said the jolly widow. "I kim over an' helped the bye a bit, an' sure it's nothin' at all, at all."

"It was kind of you, Mrs. Mulligan, and I won't forget it," said Harry. "It's a good friend you are," and he treated her to more soda water, after which she went across the street to her rooms.

Harry then related his adventures to Joe, and said he rather thought he was master of the situation.

In the afternoon a lawyer called on Harry and took him to the rear of the store, where he said:

"I am Mr. Drew's lawyer. Mrs. Drew has utterly ruined herself by her actions, and her husband is ready to settle at your price. His wife has left the State, and he thinks she is insane. He has had no hand in this matter."

"I am not sure of that," Harry said. "He was in the carriage when she drugged me."

"That is true, but he did not know that she had such intention. He has been trying to keep her from bothering you, but her head has been turned by the loss of her social prestige, and he could do nothing with her."

"Well, he must settle with my lawyer in the matter of damages. I will see him and tell him what I want."

"Why call in anyone else?"

"Simply because I am not quite equal to the task of fighting that Drew gang all by myself."

"The deuce you say! You have been more than a match for them all the way through. They think you are the brightest youth alive!"

"They have managed to make life a burden to me, all the same, though. Mr. Evans is my lawyer. His office is over Cranleigh's Bank. See him to-morrow, and he'll tell you what I am willing to do."

The lawyer went away, and Harry left soon after to see Mr. Evans and find out what was best for him to do.

"You have no right to compound a crime," said the lawyer, "but you can settle a case of damages outside of the court. You are entitled to good damages, and I would advise you to settle for \$10,000."

"I will leave it all with you, then," said Harry.

"Yes, leave it with me and I'll make him pay well for his fun."

Harry then came away and hastened back to his store.

The first to greet him was Tommie Drew.

"Hello, Tommie!" he exclaimed, as he grasped the little fellow's hand.

"I say, Harry," said Tommie, in a half-whisper, "Jule is up at the corner, and wants to see you. She won't come here."

"Then I'll go to her," and he bolted out of the store and ran up to the corner.

"Oh, Harry!" said Julia Drew, when he joined her. "My heart is broken!"

"What's the matter, Julia?"

"Brother is locked up and mother has fled to escape a similar fate."

"Yes, but she will come back and Gus will be turned out, all in a day or two. I have just come from my lawyer's, and he

and your father's lawyer are going to settle it out of court. She won't bother me any more, I guess. Is she crazy, Julia?"

"I think she and Adele are both crazy. They do nothing but rave over the way society has ignored them since you left us. You won't send Gus to prison, will you, Harry?"

"No, Julia. For your sake I am going to let up on him. Your father, though, will have heavy damages to pay. Come down and see my little store. It's a busy little place. Some day I'll have a larger one."

"Oh, I do hope you may."

"I owe it all to you, Julia. I borrowed money on your ear-rings and have already made almost enough to pay it back."

"I am so glad I gave them to you, Harry."

"You loaned them to me, Julia, and some day you'll find them again, you know."

"Yes," and she laughed over the idea as she went with him down to the little store.

She found Tommie filling up with soda water, and was persuaded to take a glass herself with Harry. But she dared not remain long there for fear it should get to the knowledge of her family, so she and Tommie soon left and hurried home.

Later in the evening Joe was out on the sidewalk, looking on as Harry was putting up the shutters over the front window. A young tough came along, stopped, and looked on, too. They took no notice of him. But Joe saw him wheel round and throw something inside the store to the farther end and then run. The next moment a frightful explosion followed, and the little store was a wreck!

CHAPTER X.

WHAT FOLLOWED THE EXPLOSION.

The force of the explosion was terrific. It sent Joe and Harry rolling on the pavement halfway across the street. Even the young villain himself was knocked down, and a great shower of splinters and glass was sent flying in every direction.

Harry never lost his presence of mind. He and the young villain rose to their feet at the same moment. The villain was about eighteen and taller than Harry. Yet the latter seized a hatchet, which had been blown out of the store, and rushed at him.

The young tough took to his heels, and Harry gave chase. He made straight for the dock at the foot of the street.

There they ran into the gang to which the young villain belonged. They at once surrounded Harry.

Whack!

He struck one a blow on the head, and he went down like a log.

"Trow 'im in der water!" cried one of the gang, as they closed in on him.

Whack! Whack!

There were three left, and they had out their knives for him, when a big brawny longshoreman came running up to his assistance. He downed one with a blow of his big bunch of fives, kicked another into the water, and the last one took to his heels and got away.

"Thank you, sir," said Harry. "This fellow here blew up my store with a dynamite cartridge. I want to give him to the police."

"Better kill 'im, lad," said the big fellow, giving the prostrate young tough a vicious kick.

"No, I don't want to kill 'im," said Harry. "I guess I came

very near it, though, for I chopped him on the head with this hatchet."

The others began to pull themselves together and wanted to leave. Harry tapped one on the head with the hatchet, and the big longshoreman looked after the other.

Just then two policemen came up and took charge of them. The longshoreman knew the officers.

"They belong to the lumberyard gang," he said to one of the bluecoats.

"Yes, I know them," and they proceeded to handcuff them.

"They blew up my store with a dynamite cartridge," said Harry.

"That's a serious crime," remarked the officer.

"Yes, and I hope I have given the one who threw it a very serious blow."

"Which one was it?"

"That fellow there," and he pointed to one of them still lying on the dock.

"I'll have to send for an ambulance. He is badly hurt."

A crowd collected at the dock as well as at the scene of the explosion. Harry could not get within fifty feet of his store. The police had taken charge and Joe had been taken home by an officer.

"It's the work of the lumberyard gang," said a young woman standing near, as Harry passed by in the crowd, "and I hope it will be the end of the gang. They have all been down on Harry Graham because he had Tim McKay sent to the Island."

"Harry was too fresh," said a youth in a high collar near her. "If he'd hung up the price of the sodas Tim would have paid him. Tim was square."

"He is a thief," said the young woman, "and his friends are no better."

"Oh, you make me tired," retorted the young man.

"Yes, but you never get tired doing any honest work. Your mother and two sisters are tired all the time working to support you."

"If you were a man I'd punch your head."

"I am a man, punch mine," said Harry, turning and facing him. "If you are a friend of that Tim McKay you must be one of the same stripe."

"Oh, you are the boy merchant. You see what your freshness has brought on you."

"Yes, and the villain who did it is in the hospital with a broken head, and four of your lumberyard gang have gone to the police station to wait for him. How is it you were not with 'em?"

"I don't belong to 'em."

"You are only a friend. You ought to go take them a bottle of soothing syrup."

The girls laughed and the young tough slunk away in the crowd, glad enough to escape the caustic tongue of the young merchant.

Half an hour later Harry met his landlord, and that individual shook his hand and said:

"I am glad you are not hurt. I was afraid you had been blown up."

"I am all right. It's the other fellow who is hurt."

"How was he hurt?"

"I ran him down and chopped his head with this," and he showed him the hatchet he had used.

"Good! Where is he?"

"The police got him and three or four more of the gang."

"Good! I'll back you in sending them up the river. How much insurance did you have?"

"Not a penny."

"The deuce!"

"Not a penny. Have been so busy I never thought of insurance."

"That's poor business. You are cleaned out then?"

"I don't think so. Fix up the store again and you'll get your rent. I've got as much money now as I had when I started."

That seemed to satisfy the landlord, and he went home more pleased than he thought he would be.

Harry was permitted to go into the store with the police to look after the money that was in the drawer at the time of the explosion.

It was all there, and he put it into his pocket. The soda fountain was but little damaged, though the glasses and syrup bottles were broken.

Harry went home and left the police in charge of the place. He found Joe hurt on the shoulder where something had struck him.

When he got out in the morning he found accounts of the explosion in all the papers, and he learned from one of them that the young dynamiter was hardly expected to live, the hatchet having pretty well ruined his head.

"Glad to hear that," he said, as he laid down the paper to eat his breakfast. "I guess that gang is done for, and the advertisement will make business good when I open again."

When he went to the store again he found the police guarding the place and his goods.

"You want a guard here all the time to keep the thieves away," said the officer. "Get big Mike—Mrs. Mulligan's cousin. He is strong as an ox, and the boys are all afraid of him."

He sent a boy to find him, and when he came he found him to be the big longshoreman who had helped him capture the lumberyard gang the evening before.

"Well, I am glad it's you," he said to the big fellow. "I want to hire somebody to help me get things in shape again. Can you help me for a week or two? I'll pay you what you get for work alongshore."

"Yes, and may the Lord have mercy on the thief as I catch stealing from you."

"Well, I don't want you to have any even if the Lord does," said Harry. "We'll see if we can't get things in shape again," and they went to work to remove the debris, whilst workmen attended to putting a new glass to the front window.

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY SQUEEZES DREW AND BEATS THE TOUGHS.

It was about noon when Harry received a telegram from his lawyer, asking him to come down to his office immediately.

Of course he went.

Mr. Drew and his lawyer had been there and signed an agreement, which Harry also was to sign.

It was an agreement not to sue for damages for anything he may have suffered at the hands of any member of the Drew family up to date, in consideration of which said Drew was to pay him the sum of \$10,000.

Harry signed it, and then the lawyer gave him Drew's check for the money.

"Very good," said Harry. "Now what is your fee?"

"One thousand dollars—ten per cent on the amount paid."

"Very well. I'll give you a check on Cranleigh's bank and deposit this one against it."

"That will do," and the check was given then and there."

"Whew!" exclaimed Harry on his way to the bank. "This

will give me a boost. I'll open a big store now and make money faster than I ever dreamed of. I guess Mrs. Drew will love me more than ever now—in her way."

When he deposited the check the banker stared at him.

"What have you been doing?" he asked.

"Been making 'em pay for their fun," was the reply.

"You have made them pay well, I should say."

"Yes. I thought it about what the racket was worth."

"How about the fun last night?"

"That's another game. The Drews were not in it. I won't get any money out of that, but I guess I've had some little satisfaction, though."

"Yes, I should say so. Do you want any money out of this?"

"Not now. I have given Mr. Evans a check for \$1,000 as his fee."

"All right," and the deposit was duly entered on the books of the bank.

Harry came away with a light heart. He no longer grieved for the losses he had sustained by the explosion. To him the future was bright now, and he hastened home to tell Joe about it ere he went to the store again.

"I am going to open a big store downtown somewhere," he remarked to the cripple, "and you shall have charge of the cash drawer, old man."

"Good for you, Harry. When it gets full I'll skip out for Canada with it."

"Yes, you're good on the skip," returned Harry, and then he left the house to go down to the store.

Big Mike had kept the thieves at bay and everything was going on all right. Harry remained with him all the afternoon, and Mrs. Mulligan came over to see him.

While there a tall, well-dressed girl of nineteen years of age came and asked for him.

She was beautiful, and Harry wondered who she could be.

"You are Harry Graham?" she asked.

"Yes, that's my name," he said.

"My brother was one of those bad boys who blew up your store," she remarked.

"Indeed! I hope you are not proud of him."

"No, we are not. He is my only brother, and we have done all we could to keep him out of bad company. But we could do nothing with him; yet I have come to beg you not to be hard on him."

"I have nothing in the world to do with his punishment, miss," Harry said. "The court will attend to that. Perhaps if he is well punished now he won't be hanged in the end."

She burst into tears.

"He has nearly broken our hearts. It would kill us to have him sent to prison."

"Go and see the judge. Maybe he may do something for you. I think myself that the whole gang of them ought to be put in a bag and sunk in the river!"

She paled and winced, but made no reply. She depended on her personality to win. Smiling through her tears, she asked:

"Won't you ask the judge to let him off? He'll be a good boy after this."

"How old is he?"

"He is two years older than I am."

"And you are at least two years older than I. He must be about 21 years old. I am a boy of 16 and he comes round blowing up my store. I shall do my best to send him up the river, miss."

She began crying again, and a tough-looking young man came in and asked:

"Oh, he's ever so mean, Tom," sobbed the girl.

"I'll everlastingly smash yer head for you!" cried the

tough-looking young man, making a demonstration toward Harry.

Big Mike came in from the rear, and gave him a kick that lifted him clear off the floor.

"Clear out now," was the order, and both he and the girl made very hasty exits.

"She is as tough as her brother," said Big Mike. "I know 'em both, and she can cry and play innocent like a baby. You want to look out for her, boss."

"Yes, I am on to that game. I am not quite as green as they think," and Harry laughed, as he saw the couple go down the street together.

That evening he saw in the paper that a little store was to let down on Fulton street near the ferry. Early the next day he went down and looked at it.

The rent was high, but it was in a good place for business.

He got it, paid a quarter's rent in advance, and set about stocking it. It took him a week to get it in shape. But he worked like a hero, and when the sign went up—"Harry Graham, Boy Merchant"—the customers came in to greet him.

Joe was the cashier and Sadie Beams at the soda fountain. She had resigned her other place to take that one. As she was bright and pretty, she did a big business.

Mrs. Mulligan took charge of the little store as his agent, and big Mike went with him downtown as porter and man-of-all-work. Joe called him the big guardsman, however, and soon grew to love him for his strength, good sense, and kindness of heart.

One day a man came into the store and said to Harry:

"I am the captain of a schooner trading in the South Seas, and have on board two chests full of curiosities picked up among the islands. If you would come down and look at them I'll sell cheap."

"What are they?"

"All sorts of curious shells and no end of things made by the natives. They would sell fast if put up in a store. I am going to sail to-morrow and would sell cheap to get rid of them."

"I'll go down and look at them," Harry said, and he took Mike along to take charge of them in case he bought them.

On reaching the dock the skipper said he'd give him a cup of coffee such as he had never tasted before. He had such a jolly way about him that Harry did not feel like declining it.

The skipper led the way on board and the two followed him. They sat in a comfortably-furnished cabin and waited for the coffee.

When it came in both Harry and the guardsman drank of it. They thought it the best they had ever tasted, having a flavor different from any they had ever known.

A few minutes later both of them fell from their seats, overcome by some subtle drug in the coffee. The captain chuckled and at once gave orders to up anchor and away.

CHAPTER XII.

BIG MIKE AND THE SKIPPER.

When he came to again, Harry found himself on a narrow bed wondering where he was. He was not familiar with the insides of vessels, so he wondered why the room moved in the way it did.

In another berth he saw big Mike pulling himself together as though but half awake.

He got up and went to him, shook him by the shoulder, and called in a whisper:

"Say, wake up, Mike!"

He had to shake him again and again ere he could arouse him.

"Eh! What! What's the matter?" he finally asked, scrambling up to a sitting position.

"I don't know," said Harry. "I think we must be on ship-board and out at sea."

The big fellow instantly pulled himself together and then lay quiet for a few moments. He knew well the motion of a vessel under a spread of canvas.

"Yes," he said, "we are at sea, lad. We have been trapped. That coffee was drugged last night and here we be."

"My gracious!" gasped Harry. "What are we to do?"

"We are going back to New York or that skipper goes to Davy Jones' locker. Just leave it to me," and they both got up and took a few turns to make sure that they were fully over the effects of the drug.

"Come up on deck," said the big fellow, leading the way. Harry followed him.

They were at sea and out of sight of land.

The captain was not on deck.

"Where is the captain?" the big fellow asked of one of the sailors.

"In the cabin."

He went down into the cabin, and found the captain there.

"Good-morning, captain," he greeted the skipper.

"Good-morning," said the skipper, looking up at him.

"How is it you have taken us to sea?"

"I thought both of you had been put ashore until this morning," was the cool reply. "I am sorry, but it can't be helped now."

"We'll see about that," and the heavy fist of the big fellow landed on the ear of the skipper, and laid him senseless on the floor.

"Now we'll tie and gag him, boss."

He took a towel from the captain's cabin and made a gag of it. Then he found a ball of tarred twine with which he bound his hands behind him.

"Now go up on deck and tell the mate to come down here," he said to Harry.

Harry obeyed. He saw that the big fellow was a general in his way, whose courage equaled his strength, and did not hesitate to aid him in every way possible.

The mate came down into the cabin and was instantly seized by the big fellow, who said:

"We were drugged and taken out to sea. We are going to go back to port. Make a cry and it will be your last!"

The mate was almost paralyzed with terror. He was bound securely and laid in his berth.

Then the big fellow secured a revolver which the captain had in his desk and went upon deck.

"Men," he called out to the sailors, "the skipper invited this lad and me on board yesterday afternoon to do a little business. He gave us some coffee to drink, and we thought it the best we ever tasted. We fell asleep, and this morning found ourselves out to sea. The skipper is tied up in his cabin, and so is the mate. This schooner is going back to New York or every man on board dies. Tack about and make for port. I am captain now."

The men were dumfounded at the sudden revelation.

The man at the wheel at once obeyed the order, for he saw that the big fellow was a match for the entire crew of five men.

In ten minutes the schooner was heading for New York again. The men obeyed without any questioning, for they did not care to try force with the big fellow.

Giving Harry the revolver the big fellow went below and

told the mate that he wanted to know something about the matter.

"So do I," replied the mate. "I knew nothing of the affair at all. The captain will tell you as much if you will remove that towel from his mouth.

The towel was removed.

"It's all a lie!" said the captain. "There was no drugging done. They went to sleep from too much beer or liquor. I gave orders for them to be placed on the dock before we sailed, and thought it had been done."

That was what he said to the mate.

"That won't do, skipper," said big Mike, shaking his head. "I'm going to turn you over to the sheriff and make a case against you in the Marine Court."

The skipper was silent. He was doing some hard thinking.

In the meantime the vessel was making good speed back to port, and by the middle of the afternoon they were entering the Narrows.

Mike kept his eye on everything so as not to be caught unawares. The skipper finally called to him and said:

"See here, it will cost me one hundred dollars a day to stop in port. I am willing to settle and send you ashore in a boat. What do you say?"

"That's good sense," said Mike. "I'll see the boss about it," and he went up and told Harry about it.

"I don't know what to say," Harry replied. "What ought I to do, Mike?"

"He can be sent to prison," said the big fellow, whose service alongshore had given him many points on marine law. "He'll pay a big sum to get out of the scrape, so take it and let him go."

"Well, tell him we'll let up on him for \$2,000," Harry said.

Mike went down to the skipper and told him the price of his liberty.

"I'll give \$1,000 and call it square," he said.

"\$2,000 or nothing," said Mike, "and you're getting off cheap at that."

"Well, let me up and I'll pay the money," the skipper finally said.

Mike unbound him and he went to his chest and got the money, all in gold, and counted it out, handing it over to the big fellow.

Then the boat was lowered, and the two got in, were rowed ashore on Staten Island, and then the boat returned to the schooner.

"Here's the money, sir," said Mike as soon as they were landed in a lonely spot, handing him the bag in which the gold was.

"Yes, let's see. They are twenty-dollar goldpieces," and Harry counted fifty of them.

"These are yours, Mike, for you were taken out to sea as well as I, you know."

"God bless me! You don't mean it, sir!" gasped big Mike.

"Yes, I do. You saved my life that time as well as your own. But for you I'd never gotten out of that vessel," and he thrust it into his hand.

"Boss, I'll serve you all my life," said the big fellow, his eyes filling with tears. "This means more to me than you think."

"Yes, I know what it means, Mike. You have been out of work a good while and many things are needed at home. I understand. See here, Mike, you are my hired man, but henceforth we are two friends who will stand by each other to the end, eh?" and he held out his hand as he spoke.

"God bless me, yes, boss!" and the honest fellow grasped his hand as in a vise. "I'd die for you, sir!"

"Well, say nothing about this thing to anyone till I have

a chance to find out what is at the bottom of it. Come, let's get back to New York as soon as we can."

CHAPTER XIII.

HARRY AND THE FAIR JULIA.

On their way up to the city both Harry and Mike stood out on the deck of the ferryboat and gazed at the schooner making its way out to sea again.

"There she goes, Mike," Harry said to the big fellow. "I guess the skipper is glad enough to get away."

"Yes, indeed, sir," said Mike.

"I don't believe his yarn at all, for I am quite sure somebody hired him to play me that trick, and I am going to see if I can find out about it."

"I wish some other skipper would play us the same trick," said Mike, jingling the gold in his pocket. He never had one-tenth as much money before in all his life.

"Yes, it has paid us pretty well," assented Harry, "but it was a great risk. But for you I'd have been a goner."

"But I was there," said Mike with a grim smile.

When they reached the New York end of the ferry line Mike said to Harry:

"My wife will be uneasy about me. I never before was absent from her all night since we married fifteen years ago."

"Well, you go on home and let her know you are all right. I'll go by the store and see how things are there. But mind you, say nothing of what has happened."

"Never a word, sir."

At the store Harry found many customers on hand. Joe and Sadie looked at him inquiringly, but dared not ask him any questions in the presence of the other clerk and so many customers.

He was looking around the store when little Tommie Drew came in, his first visit to the downtown place.

"Hello, Tommie! Glad to see you, old man!" exclaimed Harry, shaking hands with him.

"Say, Harry, Jule is up the street in a candy store. She won't come down," and little Tommie gave him the information in a half whisper.

"Come and show me where she is and I'll make her come down," Harry said, leading the way out of the store.

They found her in a little candy store, and Harry said to her:

"You can't keep away from sweet things, can you?"

She laughed, blushed and said all girls liked candy.

"Come down and have some sodawater with me. I want to tell you something."

She went with him.

On reaching the store he ordered sodawater for three. They drank it, and then he said to Tommie:

"Here, old man. Just hang round here and pour in sodawater till you run over. It won't cost you a cent. Sadie, fill him right up to the muzzle."

Sadie laughed and proceeded to draw another glass for Tommie.

"Now, Julia, come back to the office with me," and he led the way back to the little private office in the rear of the store.

There he seated her in a chair by his desk and said:

"I am very glad you came down, Julia. I've made money fast and can now return you your earrings any time you may want them."

"Oh, Harry, I am so glad for your sake!"

"I owe it all to you, Julia. I won't forget it. I am all the

time thinking about you and how I can show you how grateful I am to you."

Julia blushed and her eyes had a happy light in them.

"But what a time you have had," she said. "They blew up your store. I read all about it in the papers."

"Yes, so they did. But it was a good thing for me, as it made everybody my friend."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. It was a splendid advertisement for me."

"But when are you going to sea, Harry?"

"Going to sea? Why, I am not going to sea! Who said I was?"

"Papa said he heard you were going in a few days."

Harry was dumfounded.

"When did he say that?"

"At the breakfast table yesterday morning, and—and—I wanted to see you before you left."

"Well, I am not going, nor did I ever intend such a thing. What is Gus doing now?"

"Nothing at all. He has been keeping very quiet since the trouble about that ring."

"And your mother?"

"She has not been out since she came back. She and Adele just mope and cry half the time."

Harry looked through the glass partition of the little office at the customers in the front part of the store, and made a sudden start.

"By George, Julia!" he exclaimed. "Here comes your father! Get into this little closet here and wait till I see him!" and he held open the door for her.

She went in and he shut the door. He then looked out again, and finally went out to meet Mr. Drew.

But ere he got to him he heard him say to Tommie, who was filling himself with foaming sodawater:

"What are you doing here, Tommie?"

"Drinking sodawater," was the reply of the little fellow, who was frightened at being caught there.

"I told him to come down and drink whenever he wanted to," said Harry.

At the sound of Harry's voice Mr. Drew staggered as if stricken a hard blow by some invisible hand.

"Won't you have a glass with Tommie?" Harry asked him.

"No, thank you, I never drink it. I heard you had opened down here and dropped in to see how you were getting on."

"I am doing well—making money," Harry replied.

"Glad to hear it."

"That explosion was a fine advertisement for me."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Such things generally do. If it were known that I was kidnapped and taken to sea yesterday, and that I captured the vessel and forced the crew to return to port and land me in the city, my receipts would increase \$100 a day, and I— Why, what's the matter, Mr. Drew? Are you ill?"

"I—I—am—not feeling well," he stammered, his face ashen-hued and lips blue.

"Come back and sit down," Harry suggested to him.

"No—no! It will soon pass off. I am somewhat subject to sudden attacks of late."

"I believe I am, too," remarked Harry. "I've been blown up, drugged and kidnapped. If I didn't have as many lives as a cat, I'd have been dead long ago."

"I had not heard of the kidnapping affair," Drew remarked.

"Well, some day I'll tell you all about it. On my promise not to prosecute the skipper will go into court and tell all about it. Then we'll have a circus, and the performance will go on up the river for years."

Again Drew grew faint and was almost on the point of

falling. But he finally braced up and staggered out of the store.

Harry went out and saw him go up the street toward Broadway, after which he re-entered the store and went back to rejoin Julia.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH HARRY MAKES A BIG DEAL.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed little Tommie, when he saw his father go out without saying anything to him. "Ain't I glad! He almost scared the sodawater out'n me," and he ran back to see Julia and tell her about it.

"Did he say anything about me, Tommie?" she asked

"Nope."

"Sure?"

"Yep," and then he told her what passed between them, adding:

"Harry told him to fill up, too, but he wouldn't for a cent. I'm as full as a goat myself, though," and then he turned to wander round the store, leaving Harry and Julia to themselves.

"What in the world did he want?" Julia asked.

"I guess he wanted to see whether or not I really had gone to sea," Harry replied.

"Did he say anything about it?"

"Not a word."

Then they talked of other things, and Harry finally said:

"Bessie Cranleigh and her mother think much of you because I told them what a good heart you had. They despise your mother and Adele, though."

"They don't know of the earrings, do they?" Julia asked.

"No; I have not told them. Say, Julia, come down with Tommie once or twice a week, won't you?"

"Do you want me to, Harry?"

"Yes; I can't visit you, you know, and there's no harm in your coming here to a store like this."

"Well, I'll come down as often as I can," she replied.

A little later she and Tommie left, and Harry turned to business again.

But the strange effect of his kidnapping story on Mr. Drew set him thinking more deeply than ever before in his young life. He could not shake off the impression that his former guardian was at the bottom of that attempt to kidnap him.

"But why should he want to get me out of the way?" he kept asking himself. "We have settled up and dropped the old matter. It's very, very strange. I can't understand it."

Night came on, and he closed up and went home with Joe and Sadie. But he told them nothing of the kidnapping, and they asked him no questions about it. Joe knew that Harry would tell him when he saw proper to do so.

Days and weeks passed and the business grew apace. Harry had steam up all the time, and his customers always got what they called for very promptly.

Still Harry did not forget that kidnapping, nor did he say a word about it to anyone. Mr. Drew never came to the store again, though Julia and Tommie did once or twice a week.

One day a merchant came into the store and asked for him. Joe sent him back to the little office where Harry was writing a letter.

Said the merchant:

"I deal largely in your line of goods, and have a big stock. I am pressed for money and am ready to make a big cut to raise the amount I want. Do you wish to buy?"

"Yes, if I can see any money in it," Harry replied.

"Well, come and see the goods," said the man.

He went with him, saw the goods and got the prices. He was dumfounded at their extremely low figures. He said he'd take \$5,000 worth.

"Ah, but that won't do. I must sell the entire lot at once, and that for \$50,000. There's easily over \$100,000 worth on that list."

Harry thought for a moment or two, and then said:

"Give me twenty-four hours. I may be able to raise the money."

"Very well; but no longer. In the meantime it is confidential."

"Yes, of course."

Harry went at once to see Mr. Cranleigh. He found him in his private office.

"Mr. Cranleigh, I want \$50,000," he said.

"I want a good deal more than that, my boy," the banker replied, looking quizzically at him.

Harry smiled and added:

"Yes, so do I, but just now I am a little moderate," and he told him of the offer he had received, and what he could make off of it in thirty days.

"Have you seen the goods?" the broker asked him.

"Yes, sir."

"Can you handle such a big stock?" was the next question.

"I think I can. I'd dispose of it in job lots without moving it, renting his store for say two months."

"Is he going to give up the store?"

"I didn't ask him, but as he is going to sell all his stock I presume he is."

"Well, go ahead and buy it, first making sure the goods on the list are all in the store. Give him a check on me for the amount. Be sure of the correctness of the bill of sale."

When he went back to the merchant Harry told him he'd take the goods, pay \$50,000 in cash, but wanted to go through the stock and make sure it was all there as listed. Then he asked if the store would be for rent.

"Yes, my lease runs for three months yet. I'll throw that in without charge."

"Very good. Let's get to work."

By the aid of a dozen clerks whom he promised to keep employed until the stock was sold, Harry soon went through the immense stock and found it as listed. He then tendered the check.

"I don't want any check," said the man, shaking his head. "Bring me the money."

"I won't bring so much money through the streets," replied Harry. "Go with me to the bank and get it."

"Very well," and they went to the bank. There the money was duly paid and the bill of sale given.

The next day the merchant sailed for Europe.

His creditors came to the store by dozens clamoring for their money. Harry showed them his bill of sale duly receipted, and said the goods were his and that he owed no man anything.

"It's all a fraud!" they cried, one and all. "That boy never had the tenth part of \$50,000. That bill of sale is a fraud!"

"Of course it is!" cried one of the heaviest creditors. "The idea is absurd on the face of it. I am going to have back my goods or know the reason why."

"That boy ought to be arrested for aiding and abetting a fraud."

Being a boy, some of the more reckless ones thought the best way to do was to first have him arrested and then attach the goods. That was done and Harry, much to his astonishment, found himself a prisoner and bailiffs in charge of the store.

He sent for Cranleigh and Mr. Evans, his lawyer. Cran-

leigh gave bail for him and Evans at once began suit for damages.

When they heard that Cranleigh had loaned him the money to pay for the goods they were thunderstruck.

"He has got us for damages as well as the goods," said their lawyer, "and so you had better drop it and settle with him."

The lawyer went to Harry and offered to settle.

"See Mr. Evans," said Harry.

Evans demanded \$10,000 damages for him, and they refused.

"Very well," said Evans.

Two weeks later they offered \$7,500, and the offer was accepted and the money paid.

"I have made more money out of people who tried to do me up," Harry said to Joe, "than out of regular business. They jump on me because I am a boy, but they jump off again and rub themselves to see if they are all there."

Joe laughed and said:

"Yes, I believe they do."

He let Joe and Sadie run the store down in Fulton street where the soda fountain was, and gave his personal attention to the big stock he had bought.

It was a big job, and he was a hustler. The old clerks aided him faithfully. In two months he sold all the big stock in job lots, clearing nearly \$30,000 on the transaction.

When he settled up with the banker, the latter said:

"You have managed that matter very skillfully, Harry. I let you have the money because I had faith in you. If you need help again come to me for it."

"Thank you, sir," Harry replied. "You are the only man living of whom I would ask a favor."

It soon became known that the Boy Merchant would buy anything he could see money in. Every day drummers came in to sell him odd lots, job lots and great loads of goods that had to be sold for quick money.

One day he bought a lot of goods from a drummer at a ridiculously low price, and when they were delivered the drummer came with them and presented his bill. As he did so a man stepped up to him and said:

"You are my prisoner, sir."

"What's the matter?" the drummer asked.

"Those goods are stolen."

"Who says so?"

"I do!"

Whack!

The drummer downed him by a well directed blow.

He sprang to his feet only to be knocked down again.

"Do you want me to kill you?" the drummer asked.

"What's the matter?" a citizen asked.

"He's a thief! Those goods are stolen!" cried the detective.

"Take that back or I'll kill you!" hissed the drummer, seizing a cart-rung and raising it above his head.

"I'll take it," said the detective, very promptly.

"Very well—clear out from here," and the drummer dropped the cart-rung as he spoke.

The detective drew a revolver and said, aiming at him:

"I've got the drop on you now!"

Biff!

Big Mike gave him a blow on the neck that landed him in the middle of the street, where he lay like one dead till an officer came up.

CHAPTER XV.

JOHN DREW FAILS.

The officer called for help and another came to his assistance. When they found out what the trouble was they arrested the drummer and the detective.

Harry was nervous over the matter. He had bought the

goods at such a low price that it did seem as though there was something crooked about it.

"Yet, if he was a thief he would have run away instead of knocking down his accuser," he said to himself.

He sent a clerk to see the head of the house the drummer represented. A half hour later he came back and said:

"The goods are all right."

"That detective has got his foot in it, then," said Harry.

Later in the day the drummer came round after his money. His employer had explained the matter to the authorities and given bond for him. Harry gave him a check for the bill, saying:

"When you want to make a change come and see me. I like the way you downed that fellow."

But a few days sufficed to convince him that he had not bought such a bargain as he thought he had. The goods turned out to be dead stock so far as the New York market was concerned. He tried to dispose of it to peddlers, but they wouldn't touch it.

"I'm stuck," he said to Joe.

"Yes—on that lot you are," Joe replied.

Several months passed and not a dollar's worth of the goods had been sold. He felt like asking big Mike to kick him.

But one day an old sailor came into the store to buy something. In looking around he saw some of the goods and asked the price.

Harry put up the price 200 per cent in order to impress the old salt with a big idea of their value.

"They are worth six times as much in the Spice Islands," said the old sailor.

"How do you know they are?"

"Because I've been there several times. I'll tell my cap'n about 'em."

"All right; send him up," Harry said to him, as he went out.

The next day, much to Harry's surprise, the captain came in and asked to see the goods. He was shown through the stock, after which he made an offer for them.

As it was 60 per cent more than he had given for them Harry very properly accepted it. The captain paid for them on the spot and ordered them delivered on board his vessel at once.

Harry went up to Joe and said:

"Pat me on the back, please."

"Yes, it is the best piece of sheer good luck I ever saw," said Joe, as he patted his shoulder.

A few days later a big firm failed and things looked panicky. Other houses were tottering. Harry owed no man a dollar and had a fat bank account.

One day a merchant came to him and offered \$50,000 worth of a staple goods for half the money, saying:

"I lose half, but my credit must be saved. Can you take them?"

"Yes," replied Harry. "Let me see the goods."

He examined the lot and closed the trade. The goods were delivered to him at once.

Failure after failure followed, and one day a clerk came in from lunch and said:

"John Drew has gone under—a bad smash."

Harry heard him, and the news gave him a shock.

He went back to his little office, sat down at his desk, and was silent for quite awhile.

"Poor Julia," he said. "I am sorry for her. She deserves a better fate. I—I must see her soon. I won't let her suffer if I can help it."

That evening when he went home with Sadie and Joe he said to Mrs. Beams:

"I've rented and furnished a house. I want you to move

into it to-morrow and live there rent free. We three will pay you board enough to run it and make life easy for you. Here's the keys," and he handed her a bunch of keys as he spoke.

It quite broke up the widow, and she, Joe and Sadie went at him with a thousand thanks.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "I am going to call her mother, for she has been like one to me, and you have been like a sister, Sadie. If you won't get mad I'll kiss you."

Her eyes sparkled and lips puckered up as she said:

"Here I am."

He put an arm round her neck and kissed her.

She gave it back to him, and he returned it again.

Then the widow went at him and hugged and kissed him.

It was a happy evening all round, and when Harry went to bed that night, he had nearly made up his mind that he was in love with Sadie.

A week or two after they were settled in their new home Mr. John Drew called there and asked for Harry. He carried a bundle of papers under his arm, and told Harry he wished to see him privately.

"Come up to my room, then," said Harry, leading the way upstairs.

Drew followed him up and shut the door behind him, laid the papers on a table, sat down in the nearest chair and said:

"Harry, I am a ruined man!"

"I have read about it in the papers," Harry replied. "Some of them speak very hard of you."

"I don't mind that. My life is a failure, and I don't think it worth living out. I haven't the courage to end it, though. I am going West to try and build up again, and have come to deliver to you all the papers pertaining to your father's estate. You will find them all in this bundle. They are not worth anything at all, but I thought you would like to have them for the sake of your father's memory. He was a good man, and I am sorry the court out West decided against his estate. We may never meet again, Harry, and so I wish you success in life, and more happiness than has fallen to my lot. I have not treated you right, and I guess I have been well enough punished for it."

When he finished speaking he rose to his feet, put on his hat and left the room, going downstairs and passing out to the street without giving Harry a chance to say a word to him.

"Well, that's queer," said Harry. "I wanted to ask him some questions about that kidnapping. I won't call him back, though," and he returned to the table and gazed at the package of papers which had been left with him, thinking of the ups and downs of his father in his struggle for wealth in the Far West. They would tell the whole story some day, and he had a great desire to know it, but he had no time to go over them then.

He took them up carefully and tied them all together with a cord, saying to himself that he would take them to the store in the morning and place them in his safe for safe keeping.

In the morning when he was dressing he looked for the papers. They were not there.

They had been stolen.

CHAPTER XVI.

HARRY SETS A DETECTIVE ON DREW'S TRAIL.

"The papers are gone—stolen," Harry said, as he ended a most thorough search of the room. "And the strangest thing is that nothing else is missing. Now, who could have taken them? No living soul knew they were here except Mr. Drew

and myself, hence I infer that he took them. That means that there is some value attached to them yet. Well, they have never beaten me yet, and I am going to see to it that they never do."

He finished dressing, went down to breakfast, and greeted the family as though nothing had happened to disturb him. But on his way downtown he stopped at Pinkerton's office, and had a talk with the manager of the detective concern, saying:

"I am Harry Graham, known in the city as the Boy Merchant. I want one of your best detectives to go West for me, and if necessary stay there a year," and then he told the whole story about the papers and his guardian's conduct.

"It looks as though he is at the bottom of it," said the manager.

"I am quite sure of it," replied Harry.

"Where can he be found out West?"

"That is more than I can say. I know where the case was tried that lost my property, but don't know that he went there."

"Well, if the papers are of any value he will turn up at that point."

"That's the way it looks to me. Send me your best man to my office, and I'll fix him up for the trip," and with that Harry left the office and went on downtown.

An hour or two later he called on his lawyer, who was also Mr. Cranleigh's lawyer, and submitted the case to him.

"Mr. Drew had no right to leave the papers with you," said the lawyer. "A guardian can't lay down his trust without an order of court permitting him to do so. If the papers are lost he can be held responsible for them, as he had no legal right to turn them over to anyone unless told by the court to do so."

"That's all I want to know," said Harry. "I'll attend to the rest of it myself."

When he returned to the store he found the detective waiting for him there. He told him to go out to the point where the court was held, and find out all he could about the estate, and hunt up Drew and keep an eye on him.

"I know Drew by sight," the detective said.

"So much the better, then. Report once a week. Here's five hundred dollars. When you need more draw on me."

The detective then shook hands with him and left.

He had not been gone five minutes ere Julia and Tommie Drew entered the store. He went to meet them. Julia was pale and nervous, and even little Tommie had a sad look in his eyes.

"Sadie, fill Tommie full of soda water," Harry said. "Come back to the office, Julia," and he took a foaming glass of soda water with him, which she drank back there.

"Harry, I—I—am heartbroken," she said, putting down the glass and bursting into tears.

"Well, don't cry, Julia. Just tell me what it is," he said. "You know I am your friend always."

It took her some time to control herself so she could talk, and then she said:

"Father has gone away, you know. His creditors have taken everything from us, and we have been forced to move into such poor, stuffy rooms!"

"That is bad," said Harry. "I am sorry for you, Julia."

"Mother and Adele have hidden their diamonds, and vow they won't give them up. But they will have to sell them to buy food and pay house rent. Oh, it's awful! I do wish I were dead!"

"Oh, don't say that, Julia! Better days will come to you. You have too good a heart to suffer. I have your ear-rings yet, you know, and you can have them any time you want them."

"No, no. Keep them for me, Harry. It may be that they alone may save me from starving."

"Julia, you can never starve as long as I have a dollar. You and Tommie can come to me, you know. What is Gus doing?"

"Nothing. He drinks and talks roughly to all of us. Oh, Harry, if he were only like you!"

"The brute!" exclaimed Harry. "If he abuses you I'll thrash him, Julia. See here, I want to show you something," and he ran to his safe and took therefrom a diamond cluster ring, handed it to her, and asked:

"Do you know that ring?"

"Why, yes! It's Adele's ring, which she and mother said was lost!"

"Well, your mother hid it inside the lining of my coat when she drugged me. I found it there in time to hide it so it could not be found on me. She fled, you recollect. I have kept it till now and it is for you to say what I shall do with it."

"Oh, I don't know what to say, Harry," she replied.

"Well, I'll keep it for you," and he put it back into the safe.

After an hour's stay Julia and Tommie went away. It was many weeks ere he saw her again.

In the meantime he bought out another store at auction. The panic in business circles gave a rich harvest to those who owed no money and had the cash to buy with. That was Harry's fix. He had ready money, and bought and sold for cash."

One day a man came into the store and said he wanted to start a little store over in Brooklyn.

"I have but little money," he said, "but I own 500 acres of land in West Virginia, which I will put up as security for a stock of goods."

Harry thought over the matter a few moments, and then asked:

"What is the land worth?"

"Such land sells from \$3 to \$5 an acre down there. I've been asking \$5 per acre for mine."

"Are the titles all right?"

"Yes—they are perfect."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I don't sell on a credit to anybody. I'll give you \$3 an acre for the land payable in goods."

"Pay me twenty-five per cent in cash, and I'll take your offer," the man replied.

"All right. Bring the deed over and we'll go to my lawyer and settle the matter at once. I want to own some land. That's all the use I have for it."

The man brought the papers to him, and Harry turned them over to his lawyer. Two days later he owned the land, and the man had a well-stocked little store over in Brooklyn.

CHAPTER XVII.

HARRY MEETS WITH BIG LUCK.

About three months after Harry bought the land down in West Virginia, a man came into the store and asked for him. He was engaged at the time, and the man had to wait nearly half an hour.

When he was disengaged Harry went to him.

"I understand you own some West Virginia land," said the man.

"Yes, I own 500 acres there," Harry replied.

"I own 10,000 acres there, and would be glad to sell you some of it. I'll sell cheap—cheaper than you bought yours."

"I am not a land trader," said Harry. "I am a merchant—I bought that land in a mercantile transaction."

"I am a trader. I'll either buy or sell."

"Well, you're the sort of a man I like to meet with. I trade where I can see money. Come back into my little office."

The man went back with him and sat down. He drew out a map of the State of West Virginia, and pointed out the location of his land. Harry showed him where his was, and then asked:

"What will you give for it?"

"One dollar an acre."

"Will you sell yours at that?"

"No. Mine is in a part of the best timber section of the State. I won't take less than ten dollars an acre for it, and all to go together at that."

"\$10,000 in a lump, eh?"

"Yes."

"That's a pretty big sum of money. I am not anxious to sell mine, as I have a good deal of faith in the future of that State."

"But you would sell it if you got your price, would you not?"

"I haven't put any price on it as yet. In fact, I haven't seen it, and know nothing about it. I'll run down there some day soon and look at it."

"I'll give you two dollars an acre for it."

Harry shook his head, saying:

"If it is worth that to you, it is worth more to me."

"How so?"

"I have a chance of living longer than you."

The man laughed and said:

"Come, put a price on it, and let's see if we cannot trade. What do you say to swapping lands?"

Harry shook his head again.

"You don't want to trade, I see," the man remarked.

"No. I want to know something of the value on it, my young friend."

"I have bought many things very cheap and sold them at a good profit. That is what I am in business for."

"Yes, of course. That's the case with myself. Give me a price you are willing to take for your land, and then we can trade."

"I have made up my mind to put it at \$100 an acre until I can see it and find out all about it. You can have it at that price if you want it."

"Do you take me for a fool?"

"No. I take you for a sharp business man, but I saw through your game. You came in to buy my land. You can have it at \$100; not a cent less till I see it and get an idea why you hunted me up to buy it."

The man rose to his feet and bowing politely bade him good-day.

Harry bowed him out, and then went about his business.

The next day another man came in, and asked Sadie at the soda fountain if Mr. Graham was in.

"Yes, sir. He's in his office. Do you wish to see him?"

"Yes, if you please."

She sent a younger clerk in to tell Harry.

"Send him in," said Harry.

The man came in, and looking at Harry asked:

"Is Mr. Graham in?"

"Yes, sir; that's my name."

"I mean the proprietor of the store, Mr. Harry Graham."

"Well, I am the proprietor, and my name is Harry Graham."

"You are but a boy!"

"Yes, a Boy Merchant. What can I do for you, sir?"

"Do you want to buy any West Virginia land?"

"No, I have some for sale down there at \$100 an acre."

"How many acres?"

"Five hundred."

"I'll take it."

"Very well. When are you ready to do so?"

"Right now."

"I'll send for my lawyer to draw up the deed," said Harry, and he sent one of his young clerks to the office of his lawyer to have the papers made out.

"I'll call in the afternoon with a certified check," said the man, "just give me a receipt for \$100 on account." And he laid the money on Harry's desk.

Harry wrote the receipt and gave it to him. The man took it and went away.

He had not been gone an hour ere the other man came in and asked to see him in his private office.

Harry looked up and asked:

"Is it about that land?"

"Yes. I want to make you another offer for it."

"Too late. I got \$100 an acre for it a half-hour ago."

He turned pale and asked:

"Who bought it?"

Harry looked at the name on a bit of paper, and said:

"A man of the name of Neidlinger."

He groaned, and leaning over toward Harry asked in a whisper:

"Have the deeds been delivered?"

"No."

"I'll give you one thousand dollars if you will back out and let me have the land."

"Not for ten thousand dollars. My word is as good as my bond every time. Why didn't you take it yesterday?"

"You were too much for me," and he shook his head in a dazed sort of way.

"What has given that land such a boom?" Harry asked.

"Coal," was the reply.

"I might have gotten five times as much for it had I held on to it."

"Yes, of course."

"Well, I am satisfied. I gave three dollars an acre for it, and sold it for one hundred dollars. I'd like to buy some more like it."

The man went away exceedingly sorrowful, and Harry waited for the purchaser to come with his certified check for fifty thousand dollars.

He came at the appointed time, and got the papers, leaving the check with Harry.

"How much ought I to give to the man I bought the land from?" he asked himself, as he went to the bank to deposit the big check. "I legally owe him nothing. But he is a poor man, and needs it more than I do. I'll give him a check for five thousand dollars, and tell him about it."

He made out the check, signed, and had it certified, and then went over to Brooklyn to see the man. The store was way out on the suburbs, but he was doing quite a good business.

Harry explained the matter to him, and gave him the check. The man was dumfounded.

His wife burst into tears of joy, and hugged Harry in her excitable way.

"I wouldn't have gotten this much for the land," said the man, as he looked at the check. "They would have offered me \$5 an acre for it, and I'd have jumped at it. It is better for me as it is. Lord, how lucky for me that I sold it to the Boy Merchant. A man merchant would have kept it all, and prayed the Lord to send along another."

"That's so," said his wife. "Our little six-weeks'-old baby boy is not named yet. We'll call him Harry Graham Nesmith."

CHAPTER XVIII.

JULIA DREW GETS A SITUATION.

When he came away from the little Brooklyn store Harry felt happier than ever before in his life, for he knew he had made happy an entire family who would always love him and bless him.

"I wouldn't take \$10,000 for the satisfaction I enjoy over that little business," he said to himself as he crossed the ferry.

He was now able to buy the store adjoining him, and soon had men at work turning the two stores into one.

Rival merchants looked on and wondered how a boy had risen so rapidly in the business. They little dreamed of the causes that had contributed to his success.

Months passed, and his business grew. He was looked upon as one of the rising young men in the mercantile world. He had not seen Julia Drew, or little Tommie for many weeks, or even heard of them, and he was thinking of sending someone to find her, when he saw her come into the store. She was very pale and poorly dressed.

She went straight back to the office and he hastened to meet her.

"Julia! I'm glad to see you!" he said, leading her to a seat. "I was thinking of sending someone to hunt you up. I've been wishing a long time to see you."

"Harry, I've come to ask for work," she said in a low tone of voice. "I did not want to come for fear you would discharge someone to make room for me. But, Harry, I—I—can't live as we have been living. We have been forced to move to a cheaper rent, and now we are on the verge of starvation. Gus won't do anything, and Adele says she will lie down and die before she'll go out to work. Tommy is ragged and hungry, and is the best boy in the world."

"Don't you hear from your father at all?"

"Once in a while, but he is making nothing. He is trying to make a home for us in the West. He wrote to mother to sell our diamonds and live on the money till he could get a home ready. She did so, but Gus and Adele would have money to spend for pleasure, trying to keep up appearances, and it was soon gone. Can you give me employment, Harry?"

"Yes, Julia, and Tommy, too."

She buried her face in her hands and Harry saw the tears trickling down between her fingers.

"Julia, dear," he said, laying a hand on her arm, "don't cry. You shall never know want or trouble again. I'll put a desk in here and let you act as confidential clerk, to write letters and take charge of my mail."

"Oh, how good of you, Harry! Can I really do that?"

"What you don't know you can learn. You are a bright girl, and write a good hand. I'll never scold you, dear."

"Oh, you couldn't scold anybody. You're too good for that. Oh, bless you, Harry!" and her tears came afresh. He let her weep and then asked:

"Where is Tommie, Julia? Why has he not been to see me?"

"He has been selling papers and has had no time. Besides, he was afraid you wouldn't like to have a newsboy calling on you."

"Now, that isn't like him, Julia. Who put that idea into his head, I'd like to know?"

"I told him not to run in here so often."

"Yes, I thought so. I do feel just a little like scolding you now. Do you think I'd go back on the little fellow who has been my friend through thick and thin?"

"Don't scold me, Harry. I did it for your sake."

"Well, don't do such a thing for my sake any more. Yes, bring him along to-morrow."

"But he has no clothes fit to wear in——"

"Bring him along, Julia," and he took her hand in his and added:

"He has been like a brother to me, and I am going to be a brother to him. I wonder if he would like me to be a brother to him?"

"Of course he would. He loves you as a brother, Harry, and often speaks of you."

"Well, I am glad to hear that. I—I'd like to make him my brother-in-law."

Julia looked up at him, and turned rosy red as her eyes met his. Then her face became white, and her eyes glanced down at the floor.

He took her hand in his, and said:

"Julia, the night you gave me your ear-rings as I was leaving your father's house, you took my heart from me. It has been in your keeping ever since. To get it back I want your hand and heart with it. I love you as my own soul, and want you to be my wife, Julia. What say you, dear?"

She looked up at him, her eyes betraying the joy of her soul, and said:

"Harry, I've always loved you, and have had no wish to live except as your wife," and she seized his hand and kissed it.

Then they talked over future plans.

Said he:

"You must come here and act as my private secretary, for, say, three months, during which time you can have the dress-makers fixing you up, and I'll have a home ready for you. Then we'll marry and go to housekeeping. Does that suit you, dear?"

"Yes, Harry."

"Well, take Adele's ring back to your mother and tell her I gave it to you—tell her you have a situation here for yourself and Tommie, but don't say a word about our engagement," and he gave her the diamond cluster ring, which was once intended to send him to prison by her heartless mother.

She took it and went out, the happiest girl in New York.

When she told her mother and Adele that she was going to work in Harry's store they were both horrified.

"I'd die before I'd work for him," said Adele.

"I think you'd rather die than work for anybody," Julia replied.

Then she held up the ring and asked:

"Do you recognize this, mother?"

Mrs. Drew turned white as a sheet and could not speak.

"It's my ring," cried Adele, making a grab for it.

"Yes, it's your ring," said Julia. "Do you know how it came to be lost?"

"Hush, Julia!" gasped Mrs. Drew. "Did he tell you?"

"Yes, and sent it back to you with his compliments," and with that she dropped it into her mother's lap.

Adele snapped it up and put it on her finger. But her mother told her it had to be sold for money to buy bread and pay rent.

The next day Julia came to the store, bringing Tommie with her.

"Hello, you little rascal!" called out Harry, on seeing him. "I owe you a good licking for going back on me," and he shook the little fellow's hand for several minutes. Tommie was happy, and so was Julia.

Harry took him to a store and fitted him out from head to feet, and when he came back he gave Julia a key to a pretty little desk in the office, saying:

"In a little drawer on the left-hand corner you'll find money for your own use. Take whatever you want at any time; Joe

shall not pay you wages, for you are not a hired girl. You are my partner in this thing."

How generous is love! When she opened the desk and pulled out the little drawer of which he had told her, she found her little diamond ear-rings lying on top of a pile of twenty-dollar bills. She snatched them up and pressed them to her lips. Her eyes filled with tears of joy as she looked at Harry and said:

"These are more precious to me than all the diamonds in the world."

"And so they are to me," he replied.

Then he told her to go to a fashionable dressmaker and order everything she would need as a bride.

"There's five thousand dollars in there for you," he added. "Get such things as you know I would like to see you have," and she did as he told her.

Tommie was given a place, and he worked like a car-horse. He was allowed twenty-five cents a day for lunch. He rarely ever spent but fifteen cents for lunch.

One day Harry was astonished at seeing Gus Drew enter the store. Julia turned pale, but went forward to meet him.

"Julia," said he, in a low tone of voice, "let me have five dollars, please. Mother won't let me have a cent."

Julia had promised Harry never to let him have a penny of her money till he went to work for himself.

"Gus, I can't do it," she said to him.

"Yes, you can, though."

"But I won't," she said very firmly. "You are drinking when you ought to be at work. You must go away from here."

"I won't go till you let me have it," said he, doggedly.

While he could not hear what they were saying, Harry pretty well understood it. He quietly sent one of his clerks out for a policeman.

When he saw the officer, Gus very promptly left the store.

Harry went to the policeman and told him the nuisance had left, and that he would not need him.

"All right," was the reply. "Let me know when you need me," and the bluecoat left, too.

"I think I had better see you to the car," Harry said to Julia, when she was leaving to go home. "Gus may wait for you to annoy you, as I see he is drinking."

"Yes, thanks. Oh, Harry, isn't it awful!"

"Well, it's bad enough," said he, as he walked up the street with her.

Some two or three blocks above they saw him standing on a corner. His clothes were of the cheap, shabby genteel style, and his flushed face told that he had been drinking.

He went up to Harry and said, insolently:

"Here, I'll take charge of my sister myself, sir."

"Not without her consent," replied Harry.

"Gus, go away," said Julia.

"That's enough," said Harry. "Go away now. You ought to know me if you don't."

Gus aimed a blow at him.

Harry parried it and the next moment sent him rolling in the gutter by a blow between the eyes.

CHAPTER XIX.

HARRY AND JULIA MARRY.

Just as Gus rose to his feet to renew his attack on Harry, an officer stepped up and arrested him.

"Arrest him, too," said Gus. "He hit me first."

"Yes, I saw it," the officer replied, "but you attacked him first. He'll go along and prefer charges against you."

"Then I'll have to put you on a car, Julia," Harry said to the trembling girl by his side.

"I can go by myself," she replied, and then in a half-whisper added:

"Don't be hard on him, Harry. You can see he has been drinking."

"All right, dear," he replied, as he hailed a car; "for your sake."

He put her on the car, and then went with the officer to the station-house, where he made the charge of disorderly conduct against Gus. The prisoner had the good sense to keep his mouth shut. He was locked up and Harry went on to his home.

The next morning the prisoner was fined ten dollars. His mother sent the money to pay the fine.

Julia told Harry her mother gave her an awful scolding, and that Adele heaped a mountain of abuse upon her. It was hard to bear.

"But as I am going to leave them soon I don't say a word to them. I am too happy to quarrel with them. I can stand it two weeks longer."

"Yes, and then you shall have a home of your own where nothing shall annoy you. Say, Julia, do you know where we are going to live?"

"No, Harry," and she looked up inquiringly at him.

"I've bought your dear old home for you as a bridal present."

"Harry! Harry!" and her eyes filled with tears, her lips quivered. "I—I—don't deserve it!"

"Yes, you do, dear. You deserve all I can do for you. I wish I could give you all you deserve," and he leaned forward to add: "Your carriage and horses and servants have all been secured. If you wish to select the furnishings for the house you can do so. Buy the best and never mind the cost."

"Do you mean that I can go and make the selections myself?"

"Yes, of course."

"Harry, can't you leave the store for the day and go with me? I—I want you to go with me."

He could refuse her nothing. He left Joe and Sadie in charge and went with her. They were gone all day, and selected nearly everything that was needed to furnish the house they were to occupy.

The next day when she came to the store Harry saw that she was very pale and that she had been weeping. He asked her about it, and she would not tell him.

He went to Tommie and the little fellow told that Gus, Adele, and their mother had abused her shamefully on account of the arrest of her brother.

Harry was in a rage.

He went to Julia, and said:

"Tommie has told me all about it, dear. It has got to stop right here. You don't go home to them any more, the ingrates. I'll send for a carriage and we'll drive to the minister's and be married."

"Why, Harry! Our home isn't ready for us yet!" she said.

"No, but we can go off somewhere till it is ready. You must let me have my way this time, dear."

"I won't refuse you, Harry."

"Very good. When we are married nobody will dare to interfere with you. Put on your cloak and hat while I send for a carriage," and he turned and went out, leaving her alone in the little office.

Going over to Joe's desk Harry said to him:

"Joe, I am going away for a week or ten days, and you and Sadie must run things the best you can till I come back."

"Where are you going?" Joe asked him.

"Well, Julia and I are going to get married—that's the whole story."

"By George!" gasped Joe.

When Sadie heard of it she turned pale, and nearly fell to the floor. She had secretly hoped Harry would some day make her his wife. It took her quite a while to attend to business again.

The carriage came, and Harry led Julia out to it. She asked for Tommy. Harry called him, and she took him into the carriage with her.

"Tommie, we are going to the minister's to be married," she said to him, "and will be gone for a week or two. Tell them about it at home, and when we come back you are to come and live with us. Harry has bought our old home and given it to me."

"By George, he's a brick, isn't he?" exclaimed Tommie.

"Yes, and the best fellow in the world!" said Julia, laughing.

They went to the minister's residence and were married, after which Tommie was sent back to the store, while they went to a hotel till she could go to her dressmaker's and get the splendid wardrobe they had been making for her for over two months.

That evening they left the city to spend the honeymoon at a fashionable watering place.

When little Tommie went home in the evening and told his mother what had happened there was a scene.

"What! Married!" gasped Adele in utter amazement.

"Yes," replied Tommie. "I went with 'em to the minister's house. Julia has had dressmakers working for her for over two months, and Harry has bought our old home and made her a present of it."

Mrs. Drew was the most surprised woman in New York that evening. She had not dreamed of such a possibility. She knew Harry had made a fortune, and that he was friendly to Tommie and Julia, but somehow the idea of a match between him and Julia never once entered her head.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing!" Adele exclaimed.

"And she has been preparing for it two months, and never let us know it."

"And you treating her like a dog all the time," added Tommie. "When she met him at the store this morning he saw she had been crying, but she wouldn't tell him anything. He came to me, and I told him how you all had treated her. Then he got mad and said he'd put a stop to that right away, and so he took and married her."

"Oh, you horrid little wretch!" cried Adele, pitching at him.

Tommie got out of her way, and managed to escape from harm.

At the end of ten days the young couple returned to the city. Their new home had been made ready for them, and they went there to live.

As soon as Mrs. Drew heard they had returned she hastened to call on Julia at a time when she knew Harry would be at the store.

She was shown into the parlor, and the sumptuousness of its furnishing amazed her. Julia came down a few minutes later, dressed like a young queen. Her mother flew at her and caught her in her arms and kissed her.

But Julia did not return her kisses, and her mother chided her for it.

"I understand you, mother. You had no kisses for me when I was half the support of the family. It was nothing but abuse all the time. Now that I have a rich husband it is different."

Mrs. Drew was dumfounded. She dropped into a seat, and said:

"I am your mother, Julia."

"Yes, so you are; but it seems you have just found it out."

"Are you going to disown me?"

"Oh, no. I am quite human, I assure you. You are my mother, and can come to see me whenever you please. But Harry says that Gus and Adele shall never cross his threshold."

"What! Not let your brother and sister come to see you?"

"Tommie can come and live with us if you will let him, but Gus and Adele I have no wish to ever see again. It is my wish as well as Harry's that they keep away from me. Neither he nor I can ever forgive them. Gus is a drunken loafer, and Adele utterly heartless."

"You should be ashamed to speak thus of your brother and sister."

"I am heartily ashamed of my relationship to two such shameless people."

"Are you going to leave us in poverty while living in riches, Julia?"

"Let Gus go to work and make a fortune as Harry did. Let Adele go to work as I did. Why should they not? When they go to work and divide their earnings with you Harry says I may help you, and not before. His will is my law, and I will obey it."

Mrs. Drew wept and pleaded with her, but Julia utterly refused to either aid her or let her live with her. She went away a wiser woman than ever before in her life.

Of course, Adele and Gus swore they would not go out to work. They said it would be degrading.

Gus called to see Julia the next day after his mother's visit. But the man who attended the door had orders not to admit him.

"I am Mrs. Graham's brother," he said, very haughtily.

"She has given me orders not to admit you, sir."

"But I must see her," and he tried to push past him. The burly servant pushed him out and shut the door. He rang the bell furiously a few minutes, and the servant went out again to say to him:

"My mistress says if you do not go away I must turn you over to the police!"

He turned away and never again called at the house. The Cranleighs next door had been witnesses of his humiliation, and that broke him up completely.

CHAPTER XX.

A PROMPT RESTITUTION.

Time and hunger works wonders with certain people in this world. Gus Drew and Adele had to go to work at last, and not until Harry had positive proof that they divided their earnings with their mother would he permit Julia to assist her.

But Adele hated work. She was proud, heartless and frivolous in the extreme, and never gave up the hope that she would some day be taken in by Julia and once more be in the charmed circle of society.

Thinking that a few weeks of work had softened their resentment, she made up her mind to call on Julia and Harry one evening. When she did, the servant refused to admit her.

"Please tell my sister I wish to see her," she said to him.

He shut the door in her face, and went in to give her message to Julia.

"It's Adele, Harry," said Julia. "What shall I do?"

"Let her come in. She seems to be behaving herself now," he replied.

She was admitted.

She flew to Julia to kiss her.

Julia repulsed her and told her to be seated.

She turned to Harry and said:

"Harry, you have good reason to hate me, but I have been punished enough. I have come to beg you to forgive me all the mean things I ever said about you."

"That's a mighty hard thing to do, Adele," he replied.

"Is it harder for you to forgive than for me to ask it?"

"Oh, yes—a great deal harder; I have nothing to gain, and you nothing to lose."

"I have lost everything," she said bitterly.

"Yes, but if you were made rich again to-morrow you would be more haughtily insolent than ever. You would call me all the mean things you could think of. See here, Adele. On the night your mother drove me out of this house, and you sneeringly called me a pauper, Julia met me at the foot of the stairs out there, and slipped her diamond ear-rings into my hand, telling me to sell them and use the money to keep me from starving. I have them yet, and would not take a million dollars for them. Had you and your mother known I had them you both would have had me arrested. You both did try

—actually using a diamond ring to entrap me. Tommie was my friend, too, all the time you and your mother were trying to ruin me. You see, I remember everything. I can't forget, and am not yet good enough to forgive."

Adele buried her face in her hands, and wept. Her hopes were crushed, and despair seemed to take full possession of her.

But her grief had no effect on either Julia or Harry. They had no faith in her whatever. She went away, and they heard nothing more of her for some weeks.

One evening Tommie returned from a visit to his mother, and said:

"Oh, but they are having a high old time at home now."

"What's the matter there?" Harry asked.

"Papa has sent a big check, and writes that he has made a fortune and was soon coming home. Gus and Adele both went wild, and jumped about like lunatics."

"Oh, I am so glad!" Julia said.

But Harry smiled and said nothing.

Julia noticed it, and when they were alone together she asked:

"Why did you smile so, Harry? Do you think there is any doubt about it?"

"Why, he hasn't made a dollar," he replied. "He has simply taken charge of some of my father's property out there as my guardian—that's all!"

"Why, I thought that was all lost by a decision of the court," she said.

"Yes, so it was. But there was a tract of land which was not in the suit, and was considered worthless. I have had a man out there watching things for two years. He has never lost sight of your father for a single day, and has made reports to me once a week. That land has silver mines on it, and is now worth a million dollars. When he comes home he'll give up everything to my lawyer or go to State Prison."

"Harry, you won't put him in prison, will you?"

"No, dear. He will give up everything when he is confronted with proofs of his villainy, and I shall let him go. Don't worry, I shall not lock him up unless he compels me to."

A few days after that Harry met Adele and her mother on the street. They both turned up their noses at him, and refused to recognize him. He smiled all round his face and passed on.

When John Drew returned to the city he took pains to have it announced in the papers that he had come back a millionaire.

A note from Mr. Evans, Harry's lawyer, asking him to call at his office on an important matter, brought him there the next day.

"Mr. Drew," said the lawyer, "here are some papers for you to look over. They refer to Mr. Graham's estate—the land which was not included in the decision of the court out there three years ago. Just sit down at that desk there and look over them, please. Harry has petitioned for the appointment of a new guardian, and hence it is necessary for you to make a surrender of the trust to the court."

Drew turned white as a sheet, dropped into the chair, and

proceeded to look over the papers. He there saw that his villainy was fully known. He made up his mind at once to make an accounting and surrender the trust.

"Where is Harry Graham?" he asked of the lawyer.

"At his place of business, I presume," was the reply.

"I'll go and see him," and he rose.

"Pardon me," said Evans. "There are two detectives in the next room who are to arrest and take you to the Tombs if you do not settle this matter otherwise."

"Am I a prisoner?"

"No, nor will you be unless you refuse to make a settlement. If you go out you will be arrested."

"But it will take me several days to do that."

"Yes, and during that time you must remain in charge of those two men. Unless you are arrested it will not be known. Better write to your wife that you are out of town for a few days."

"But you will send for Harry."

"No. He declines to see you. You are to make the settlement with me."

There was no alternative, so he proceeded to make up his account with the Graham Estate. It took him several days to do it, during which time he remained in charge of the two detectives.

When he had finished and turned over the papers to Evans it was clear that he was several thousand dollars short. It was the money he had sent to his wife from the West.

Evans reported the fact to Harry.

"Oh, well, let him have it," Harry said. "He can't pay it, so there's no use in detaining him."

He was let go, and he went home to his wife and family to upbraid her as the primary cause of all his woes. It was a terrible blow to the mother and daughter.

Harry expected Drew to call on him, but he did not. Nor did any of them call on Julia until weeks after this final blow.

But one evening, as Harry was going home, passing through an unlighted street, he met what he supposed to be a poor, homeless woman, who held out her left hand in a mute appeal for charity.

He was going to give her a coin, when she suddenly flashed a pistol from under a cloak and fired point-blank at his face.

He was blinded by the burning powder, reeled backwards, and fell into the gutter. But he had not lost his presence of mind. He scrambled to his feet, but the woman was gone.

CHAPTER XXI.

A TERRIBLE ALTERNATIVE.

He was rubbing his eyes with a silk handkerchief, when two men ran up to him from the avenue below, and asked:

"Are you hurt, sir?"

"I was shot at by a woman who was begging," he replied, "and the powder flashed in my face and eyes."

Then others came up, coming out of the houses near by, and the news soon spread of an attempt to murder. An officer came, who wanted to call an ambulance.

"No," said Harry. "I live near here, just two blocks away. I'll go home and send for my physician."

"Give me a description of the woman?" the officer asked.

He gave him the best description he could, which was but a poor one at best, and then went on toward his home, accompanied by two citizens who lived near where the shot was fired.

Of course, Julia was terribly alarmed when he was led into the house, his face blackened by the burnt powder.

"The bullet didn't hit me, dear," he said to her, "so don't be alarmed. I will soon be all right again. Send Tommie for Dr. Holmes."

Tommie soon had the doctor there, and an examination was at once made.

"It was a narrow escape," the doctor said. "His eyes are safe, but the marks of burnt powder will remain in the skin of the face as long as he lives."

When the doctor was gone Julia said to Harry:

"I am going to see my mother to-morrow, Harry, and tell her she must move away from New York at once, and not stop anywhere nearer than one thousand miles, and you must let me pay the expense of the move."

"So you think she is the one, do you?"

"I am quite sure of it."

"Why should she wish to kill me?"

"Because she hates you, and because she thinks if you were out of the way she could persuade me to divide everything with her."

"You reason well, dear," he said. "Do as you please about it."

The next day she went to see her mother. When Adele told her mother that Julia had come, the guilty woman nearly fainted. She threw herself on her bed and said:

"Tell her I cannot see her. I am too sick and nervous."

Adele told Julia what her mother had said.

"Well, you'll do," replied Julia. "Just tell her that if she will move away from New York, going at least one thousand miles off, I'll pay all expenses, and give father one thousand dollars to start business on. If she does not go within one week from to-day she'll be arrested and prosecuted for attempting to kill Harry."

"Why, when did she try to kill Harry?" Adele exclaimed.

"Get her to tell you about it. Tell her that if she does not go no power on earth can save her," and with that Julia rose to her feet and abruptly left the house.

"I didn't do it!" exclaimed Mrs. Drew when Adele told her what Julia had said. "I don't even know what she means. Get a paper and see if anybody has tried to kill Harry."

A morning paper was procured, and there they read an account of what had taken place the evening before.

Adele eyed her mother suspiciously, and asked:

"Was it you, mother?"

"No," she replied.

"Who was it, then?"

"I don't know."

She was silent for some moments, and then, looking her mother in the eyes again, said:

"I am sorry you missed him."

John Drew came home at noon, and was told what Julia had said. He had seen the accounts of the attempt to kill him.

"What does Julia mean?" he exclaimed.

"Go and see her," his wife suggested to him.

He waited till the next day, and then called at the house. Harry was at home with his face bandaged. Julia met him in the parlor. She was pale, but a fierce light gleamed in her eyes. She could forgive anything but an attempt to kill her Harry.

"Julia, my child," he said to her, "what did you mean by telling Adele we must leave New York?"

"I mean just what I said. If you do not take my mother a thousand miles away from New York I'll see that she is sent up to Sing Sing."

"Your own mother?"

"Yes. I forgive everything, but this I will not forgive."

"She did not do it."

"But she did," said Julia, with startling emphasis, "and it is the end. She must go! She is dangerous. If not, to prison, or else one thousand miles away from New York. I'll pay all expenses and give you one thousand dollars; but go she must!"

"Can I see Harry?"

"No. You have six days. To-morrow you will have but five. If she is here six days from now no power on earth can save her. If she ever returns I'll have her arrested. She is my mother, but Harry is my husband. He is kind and loving—she is a fiend."

John Drew was amazed at the Spartan firmness of Julia. She told him to leave Tommie with her, and she would be as a mother to him and take care of him till he came of age.

As he was going to leave she said further to him:

"Tell her that if in the future Harry is attacked by anybody I shall believe that she is the instigator of it, and will at once place the proofs we have of her guilt in the hands of the officers of the law. I would a thousand times rather see her in prison for life than have my husband killed. Will you tell her that, papa?"

"Yes, every word of it," he replied.

"It seems hard, but what can I do? She seems bent on ruining everybody, herself included."

He went away, and on the fourth day Tommie came home and said they were gone. Julia had given her father the money she had promised him.

Days, weeks, and months passed, and nothing was heard from them, and both Julia and Harry wondered.

"I wish I knew where they were," Julia said one day.

"I don't care to hear from any of them," said Harry. "Yet I don't believe we have heard the last of them."

That very day two men entered Harry's store, went back to his office, shut the door and stood before him. The larger of the two drew a dirk knife and said to him:

"Fill out and sign a check for \$10,000, payable to bearer, or you are a dead man!"

CHAPTER XXII.

A SUCCESSFUL CRIME.

On hearing the cool, but determined demand of the stranger Harry looked up at him as if to make sure that he was really in earnest. Their eyes met, and the cold glitter in those of the stranger, to say nothing of the steely glint of the dagger in his hand, told him that his safety lay in a quick compliance with the demand.

He opened his check-book and proceeded to fill out the check.

When he had done so and signed it he tore it out carefully and handed it to him.

The man passed it to his pal, who folded it up and put it into his vest pocket, after which he drew a handkerchief from one pocket of his coat, and a small phial from another.

Drawing the cork, he poured the contents of the phial on the handkerchief and then spread it over Harry's head.

Harry dodged and asked:

"What do you want to do?"

"Merely to keep you from seeing us go out," was the reply. "When we are out on the street you can give the alarm."

Harry was thinking that he would have ample time to send round to the bank and have the check stopped at the bank.

So he sat still and waited for them to leave.

But they stood there and he felt the man's hand on his head as he waited. A dreamy languor came over him, and when they did leave him he was fast in the clutches of chloroform, and lying forward on his desk.

Joe saw the two men walk out and leave the store. Some ten minutes passed, and a well-known merchant came in to see him.

"He is in the office," said Joe, and the merchant went back there.

The next moment he came out white as a sheet, and exclaimed:

"Come here! There's something the matter with Graham!"

Several clerks, including Sadie Beams, ran back to the office to find him lying on his desk like a dead man.

A physician was quickly summoned, and, on making an examination, said:

"He has been chloroformed. How did it happen?"

No one knew.

"Who has been in here with him?" the doctor asked.

"Ah! those two strangers!" exclaimed Joe, looking at Sadie.

"Yes," said she, "but they——"

"Is anything missing?" the doctor asked.

The doctor was hurriedly doing all in his power to counteract the powerful drug that had been used, and asking questions at the same time.

Joe saw that Harry's watch and chain were there, so he said:

"I don't see that anything is missing, doctor."

"Look at his check-book."

Joe looked and saw that a check had been torn out without any record being made on the stub.

He looked up at the clock, and saw that a few minutes yet remained of the banking hour.

"Here, Jim," he said to one of the clerks, "take a note to the bank for me, quick!" and he seized a piece of paper and wrote on it with a pencil:

"Pay no check of this date until submitted to us," and signed Harry's name, per J. to it.

Jim hurried off to the bank with it, and found the bank's janitor at the front door ready to close it on the minute.

"I want to see the president, quick!" he said.

He was shown to the vice-president's office.

"Look after that, quick, sir," he exclaimed, as he gave him the note.

The official glanced over over it and then hurried in to see the cashier, before whom he laid the bit of paper.

"Have just paid out \$10,000 for him," the cashier said.

"To whom?"

"To bearer," and he picked up the check and handed it to the vice president.

"How long since it was paid?"

"About five minutes."

All the time he was talking the cashier was paying out money on checks of the bank's customers. The vice-president ran back into his office and asked Jim what was wrong at the store.

Jim told him how Harry had been found unconscious in his office, and that the doctor had said he had been chloroformed.

By the time he was through telling him the bank's doors were closed, though a row of people were before the cashier's window.

As soon as he could the vice-president of the bank questioned the cashier as to the identity of the man who presented the check. But as he saw only the man's face at his window he could give but a very meager description of him.

Jim went back to the store, and found that Harry had been taken to the hospital, still unconscious. He told Joe what he had learned at the bank.

"Ten thousand dollars!" exclaimed the young bookkeeper. "That's a big haul, and it may be the end of Harry in the bargain."

But the great skill of the doctors pulled him through.

When he came to a clerk was there from the store, together with a detective. The clerk gave him a note from Joe, and the detective asked for a description of the two men.

He promptly told his story, and it created a sensation, as a matter of course. The detective said he could not place the men, and Harry remarked that he was sure both wore false beards.

He was sent home in a carriage, reaching there at his usual hour. Julia saw that something was the matter with him, and asked him what it was.

"I am not feeling well," he said, as he went to his bedroom.

In a few minutes Tommie came home and from him she got the whole story. She was horrified beyond measure.

Somehow the impression that her mother and brother were at the back of it fastened itself on her mind, and the next day she mentioned it to Harry.

"No. I am satisfied that it was the work of skilled crimi-

nals," he replied. "There are men who play such games on rich men. But this was a new game and was well played. I am going to put it into the hands of the best detectives I can get."

He held a long interview with the head of the detective bureau that day. But Julia was not satisfied as to the theory Harry had advanced, so she employed a detective to find out where John Drew and his family had moved to.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HARRY MAKES TWO PEOPLE HAPPY.

When it became known how Harry Graham had been robbed, it created a most intense excitement in mercantile circles in the city. Every merchant felt that he was, more or less, exposed to the same peril.

But Harry insisted that it was a good investment for him.

"I might have been raked for a good deal more some day," he said, "and in more ways than one. I have now provided against all that, and it may yet be that I got off cheap. I now invite a repetition of the game."

He would not tell what his precautions were, but he still received visitors in his private office as before.

One day not long after the robbery, Sadie said to him:

"Harry, I am going to resign my place here at the end of this week."

"The deuce you are! Where are you going?"

"I am going into another firm," she replied.

"Ah! Somebody offers you better pay, eh? Well, who is it?"

"Mr. Marquand."

"What Marquand?"

"Mr. Henry Marquand."

"What! Our Henry, here? Why, what business is he going into?" and Harry was very much surprised.

"The matrimonial business, and I am to be his full partner," and her face wreathed with smiles as she gave him the secret.

"Oh," he exclaimed. "That's one on me, Sadie! That's a good one!" and he laughed heartily. "I congratulate both of you. He's a good fellow, and you are a prize for any man. Have your flat nicely furnished, and send the bill to me, or if you prefer I'll give you the money and let you get everything with it."

Her eyes filled with tears of joy, and she said:

"Oh, I—I—you are the best man in the world, Harry Graham."

"Except Henry Marquand," said Harry.

"He is not half as good as you are."

"Whew! You wouldn't dare tell him that!"

"Yes, I would, and if he'd deny it I'd refuse him."

"Well, we won't quarrel about that. I'll raise his salary twenty dollars a month for your sake. You have been like a sister to me ever since I found a home in your mother's house.

You will always find a true and loving brother in me. There's my hand on that," and he extended his hand to her as he spoke. She took it in both hers, and tried to thank him, but her voice failed her.

She told Marquand what Harry had said to her, and the floorwalker was all broken up over it. He had not dreamed of such things from his young employer.

They were married, and Harry and Julia were present when the knot was tied.

Another girl took Sadie's place in the store after that, and the work went on as usual.

The very next day after Sadie's marriage a man came to the store and told Harry that the Widow Mulligan wanted him to call at the little store over on the west side that evening, if he could do so. Kate Mulligan had been running the little place for him ever since he opened the downtown store, and had made it pay well.

"Tell her I will come up this evening," he said to the man.

He went away, and then Harry began to think that a trap might be laid for him, so he said to Big Mike, just before the store closed:

"Mike, come round to my house at about eight o'clock this evening. I want you to go with me to see the Widow Mulligan."

"All right, sir," said the big fellow, and prompt to the minute he was on hand.

They called at the little store, and found the widow in conversation with a strapping young Irishman.

After greetings Harry asked her how business was.

"It's good," she replied, "but it's marrying I am again."

"What! Married?"

"Not yet, but next wake."

"Oh, going to be married, eh? Well, that's good luck for some man. Who is he?"

"Mr. O'Donohue—an' this is him—the gossoon!" and she presented the young Irishman to Harry, who shook hands with him, saying:

"You are a man of good taste, I see, Mr. O'Donohue. If I had not been afraid of her I'd have made her Mrs. Graham long ago."

"Blarney!" exclaimed the widow.

"It's the truth, Kate," said Harry, "but when I remembered how you could knock a fellow about I couldn't get up courage enough to ask you."

They all laughed heartily, and then Kate said:

"Will I kape the store, Mr. Graham?"

"Why, yes, of course. If you don't I'll have to close it up. You are honest and true, and can do business better than any one else I could get. What does your man do?"

"He's a 'longshoreman."

"Does he drink?"

"Niver a drop," she replied.

"Very well. Keep the store and good luck to you. I'll send you a present to-morrow," and he shook hands with her and her intended, and went away, big Mike keeping close behind him.

A few days later Julia said to Harry:

"I've found out where they live."

"Who?" he asked.

"Why, my parents!"

"Oh! Where do they live?"

"In Philadelphia, and under another name at that."

Harry whistled.

"So they didn't go a thousand miles away, then," he said.

"No," and she had a look of disgust on her face as she spoke.

"How did you find them?"

"I've had a detective looking for them."

"Why did you want to find them?"

"To make sure of them. I did not believe they had done as they agreed to do."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know what to do, Harry. You must advise me."

"Well, in that case I'd advise you to let them alone."

"But I am sure they are plotting against you all the time."

"How do you know that?"

"All three come over to New York in disguise quite often."

"Ah!"

"Yes. Since you were robbed they have begun living in better style, and father has opened a broker's office in Philadelphia."

"Under what name?"

"Montague."

Harry laughed, and said:

"I'll wager that Adele chose the name."

Julia smiled and replied:

"Yes, it sounds just like her."

"Of course. Well, keep your detective on their trail, and tell him if any of them come to New York again to follow and notify me."

She wrote to the detective to that effect, and two days later she received word from him that Gus was on the train for New York with a black beard. Harry had a detective ready to meet and shadow him.

On reaching the city a well-known crook met him, and the two repaired to a little hotel over on the east side, where Gus put up under the name of Lawson.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

On hearing that Gus was in the city in disguise, Harry went to the proper authorities and obtained a warrant for his arrest on one of the old charges.

That done, he armed himself and went to the little hotel in quest of him. He found him, and tapping him on the shoulder, said:

"Gus, step aside with me, I wish to tell you something."

Gus was dumfounded.

He knew Harry, of course, but could not understand how

Harry knew him. But he stepped aside with him, and Harry said to him in an undertone:

"There is a warrant out for you, Gus, and for Julia's sake I have come to give you notice of it. You know very well that I would not turn my hand over to save you from any prison in the world. But I don't want to have it said that my wife's brother is a convict. Do you understand?"

"Yes," gasped Gus.

"There are warrants out for the old man, too, and for your mother," Harry continued. "What a sensation the arrest of the Montague family in Philadelphia would create? Come with me and let me see you off at once."

Gus was thoroughly cowed. He went along with him, crossed over to Jersey City, where Harry bought him a ticket.

"To-morrow a man will call on your father with money to pay the fare of the four of you to San Francisco. He will go with you, and when you have all settled down out there, will give your father money enough to start business on. If they don't go every one will be arrested."

By this time Gus had recovered his nerve somewhat, and asked:

"How do I know that what you say is true?"

"Did you ever catch me in a lie?" Harry asked. "Do you wish to take the chances and find out if it is true? If so you can cross back over to New York at once. In less than one hour after doing so you will be in the Tombs."

He decided to go on the train, and did so.

A week later he had a despatch from his agent, whom he had sent for the purpose, to the effect that the Drews were settled down in San Francisco.

Then he sent a check for \$5,000 payable to the order of his agent out there, the money to be given to John Drew. That done, he said to Julia that she would have no more cause to fear her mother, as she was now 3,000 miles away from New York.

"Oh, I am so glad," she said. "I can now rest easy and be happy."

"I am quite sure you were wrong in your belief that she was back of that chloroforming and robbery, Julia," he remarked.

"Maybe I was, but I can't get rid of the suspicion."

"It was the work of skilled robbers," he said.

"Yes, it was well done, I admit, but——"

And she shook her head.

A few months later a little baby boy was born to them, and they named him Tommie, to show Tommie Drew how much they thought of him.

Time wore on, and the boy merchant grew to become one of the merchant princes of the Metropolis. His father's estate, under Cranleigh's wise management, panned out a good deal more than a million dollars. He put the money into his business, and at the age of twenty-five was looked upon as the most successful merchant of the city.

Bessie Cranleigh married, and her husband bought a home for her on the same block with the Grahams. She had a younger sister to whom Tommie was paying attention.

Harry admitted him into partnership, and then they were married.

One day Julia got news that her mother was dead Adele married, and Gus was in China.

Her father had made a snug little fortune again, and had written to her.

By this time Harry and Julia had two children, and they were happy enough to forgive and forget. She wrote to her father that if he wished to return to New York he could do so, but that she did not care ever to see Adele or Gus again.

A few months later John Drew returned to New York.

His hair was white as snow, and his face betrayed the heavy hand of time and trouble.

Julia cried bitterly when she met him, for she believed that her mother was responsible for all the wrongdoing he had been guilty of. She ever afterwards showed him the respect due a parent from a child. He lived in a hotel on an income from the money he had made in California.

A year or two later they heard that Gus Drew had died in China.

They never heard from him again, and so concluded that the news was true.

Adele married a sea captain whose vessel plied between San Francisco and Yokohama.

Julia never saw her again, and never had any desire to.

When he was about thirty years old, Harry was nominated for mayor by the business men of the city, who had wearied of the rule of politicians.

They believed he could be elected, although all the political parties opposed him.

To the surprise of everybody, when the story of the early struggles was told, all the young men in the city went to work for the "Boy Merchant," and he was elected by a big majority.

He cleaned out the politicians and gave the city good government.

He is now retired from business with an ample fortune, and his two sons and Tom Drew run the business.

His life shows what pluck and good judgment can do in our country.

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